Flowers of the Needle, Volume VI

Ostaus, Giovanni
La Vera Perfettione del Disegno
1561

A Garden of Delightful Designs for Needlework, Gathered from the Most August and Ancient Books Writ upon The *Excellency of the Needle;* with which You may Devise and Work Most Beautiful and Glorious Works in Various Kinds of Embroidery, which shall bear Witness to Your Industry and Skill.

Compiled and Annotated by
Mistress Kathryn Goodwyn, OL
(C. Kathryn Newell)
And Newly Reissued In this Form in 2012

INTRODUCTION

The title of Ostaus' 1561 book *La Vera Perfettione del Designo*, translates to "The True Perfection of Design". The rest of the title mentions both embroidery and sewing, and names some specific stitch techniques. It was printed in Venice at Giovanni Ostaus' own print shop.

There is some introductory text, addressed to Lucretia Contarini, a woman who must have been his patroness. Much of it is philosophical in nature, pondering on how God has designed the beauties of this world to inspire poets and philosophers. Ostaus says he is attempting to transcribe God's beauties into patterns, and thereby inspire others to emulate Him and create wondrous works of their own.

After this introduction is a plate showing the virtuous Lucretia of the Romans, discovered with her daughters as she instructs them and works with them, industriously, at needlework. Lucretia is seen as a model Roman matron, practicing these chaste and wise feminine arts. The accompanying poem celebrates her as a paragon of virtue. Wisdom and beauty are hailed as the reward for being a "good woman" and employing these arts.

On the following text page Ostaus says he has devised all sorts of lovely patterns for the use of ladies in their needlework. What is interesting is that Ostaus mentions the virtues of the patterns running "long ways", i.e., what we now call "landscape orientation". This method, he states, makes it easier to show multiple repeats because he expects some of the patterns will be used as borders. Like other authors, Ostaus points out that one can affect the size of designs by counting threads. He also describes the prick-and-pounce method mentioned by other authors earlier in this series.

This work may be the first in this collection to mention enlarging a linear (i.e., "free-form") pattern by means of using squares. This method uses a background grid of squares, over which the pattern is drawn. The needleworker then transfers the pattern square by square onto the working material. If the grid on the working material is made larger, the foreground design is then proportionally enlarged when it is transferred.

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Ostaus, Giovanni ***La Vera Perfettione del Disegno*, 1561**

This is a method I saw suggested in many needlework books before the advent of photocopying.

The pattern section of this work starts with several pages of designs, drawn on squared enlargement grids. They are apparently for a type of needle lace, but I am not familiar with what type of needle lace it might be. Some patterns appear to be meant, by their orientation, to be intended for the opening front slit of a garment. At the bottom end of one is a young man (lover?) and another – a bifurcated mermaid.

Two oddly shaped patterns then appear. They are for bavari—an Italian form of partlet, or fill-in for a low neckline. This accessory seems to have evolved from a simple triangular scarf or shawl. Imagine a square folded point to point into a triangle, then worn around the shoulders. The triangular back and point are the parts illustrated here. The two fronts are like long triangles, and there are then two small connecting pieces for under the arms. In other books in this 1878 series there are patterns shown for the front pieces and connecting side pieces. The patterns I have seen indicate that bavari were worked in needle lace, in punto-en-aero/punta in aria, or reticella.

The squared background patterns just before and after the bavari patterns are lighter in nature than those before. They show scrolling foliage with grapes, deer, birds, mermen, griffins, another bifurcated mermaid, dogs, heraldic beasts, owls, acorns, and dancing putti.

The next section of patterns shows designs that are probably intended for tapestry cartoons. One shows the Judgement of Paris, another the "gentry" at play. There is also a Venus and Adonis panel, and a hunting scene. There are some patterns, very Neo-Classical in style, which might be for "Grotesque" table and bed covers. There follows a pattern showing two centaurs, putti playing with bears, griffins and other mythological beasts.

The final section of this work shows charted patterns, starting with an alphabet. Most of the patterns show typical geometric and foliate patterns. Following these are more interesting designs of birds – one page shows an owl, a goose, a stork, a peacock, heraldic birds, and others on the ground or in flight. There is a unique pattern showing a hunter pursuing a stag (headed for a fence) with his hounds.

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Following these pages is a pattern of a bowl or flowers where the pattern scrolls out in a very graceful way on either side of the vase. A pattern of this style did not occur earlier in this series. Some Moorish-style fretwork patterns follow this, then a page with heraldic beasts. The very last group includes a brocaded pattern, fretwork, and two geometric designs.

The publication stamp at the end repeats basic information from the title page.

-Kathryn Goodwyn, 2011

LA VERA PERFETTIONE DEL DISEGNO

di varie ſorti di ricami, & di cucire ogni ſorte di punti, à fogliami, punti tagliati, punti à fili, & rimeſsi, punti incrociati, punti à ſtuora, & ogn'altra arte, che dia opera à diſegni.

Fatto nuouamente per Giouanni Oſtaus.

VICTORIA.



Con gratia, & priuilegio del Illuſtriſſ. Senato Venetiano, per anni X.

In Venetia appreſſo Giouanni Oſtaus. 1561.

ALLA CLARISSIMA SIGNORA LVCRETIA CONTARINI, & per matrimonio Priula nobi e Gentildonna Venetiana.

IDDIO ſia ſempre lodato d'ogni ſuo largo dono, inſpirando particolarmente à gli huomini i concetti in ſua gloria immortale, & in honor del mondo. Piacque à ſua diuina maeſtade d adornar la terrena machina mondiale di varia virtute da rari ingegni non ſenza fatica ritrouata, & poſta in opera con ben dipinta bellezza, o ſanno i Pittori, gli Oratori, i Filoſofi, & i Poeti, i quali neceſſariamente niſſuna altra coſa piu ſtudiano, che la bella inuentione, & l'atta diſpoſitione delle coſe, innanzi, che conducano alcun loro ſtudio à qualche perfettione, & però io l'atteggio con tutta la forza del mio debil'intelletto, & coſi ho compoſto queſt'artificioſo libretto ſopra la vera eccellenza di varie ſorte di ricami à cucire, per abbellir la gioconda vaghezza delle belle Donne, & hollo giudicato degno di luce, Imaginandomi à chi drizzãdolo poi, degnamente donar lo poteſſe, niſſuna perſona m'è venuta nella mente, allaquale piu conuenir ſi poſſa cotal dono, che à voi Clariſsima SIGNORA LVCRETIA Priula, corona delle belle & virtuoſe Donne; Adunque à voi come à chiaro fonte, & illuſtre albergo d ogni dotta gentilezza, dedico, & conſacro queſta mia profitteuole, & dilletteuole fatica. V. Magnificenza, ſi degnarà di mirare al baſſo dono, che con humil cuore le offeriſco.

Di V Magnificenza affettionato ſeruitór.

Giouanni Oſtaus.

A ii

Modo bellissimo di trattenere le sue figliuole in opera, come faceua la casta Lucretia Romana le sue Damigelle. Cosi come da Tarquinij insieme col suo marito Collatino, fu trouata in mezzo d'esse a lauorare. Nel libro primo delle Deche di T. Liuio



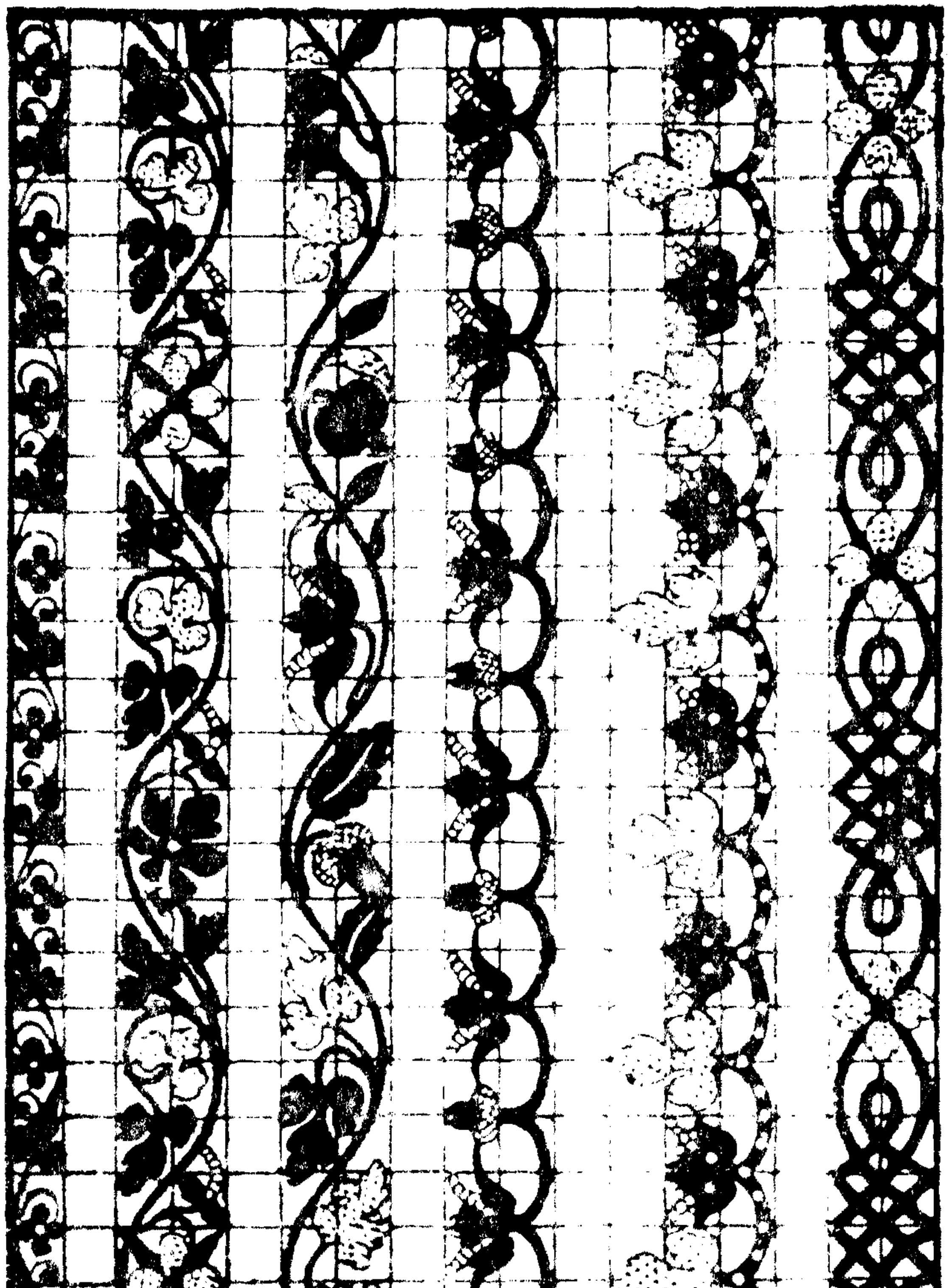
Alla Clarissima Signora Lucretia Priuli, Gentildonna Venetiana.

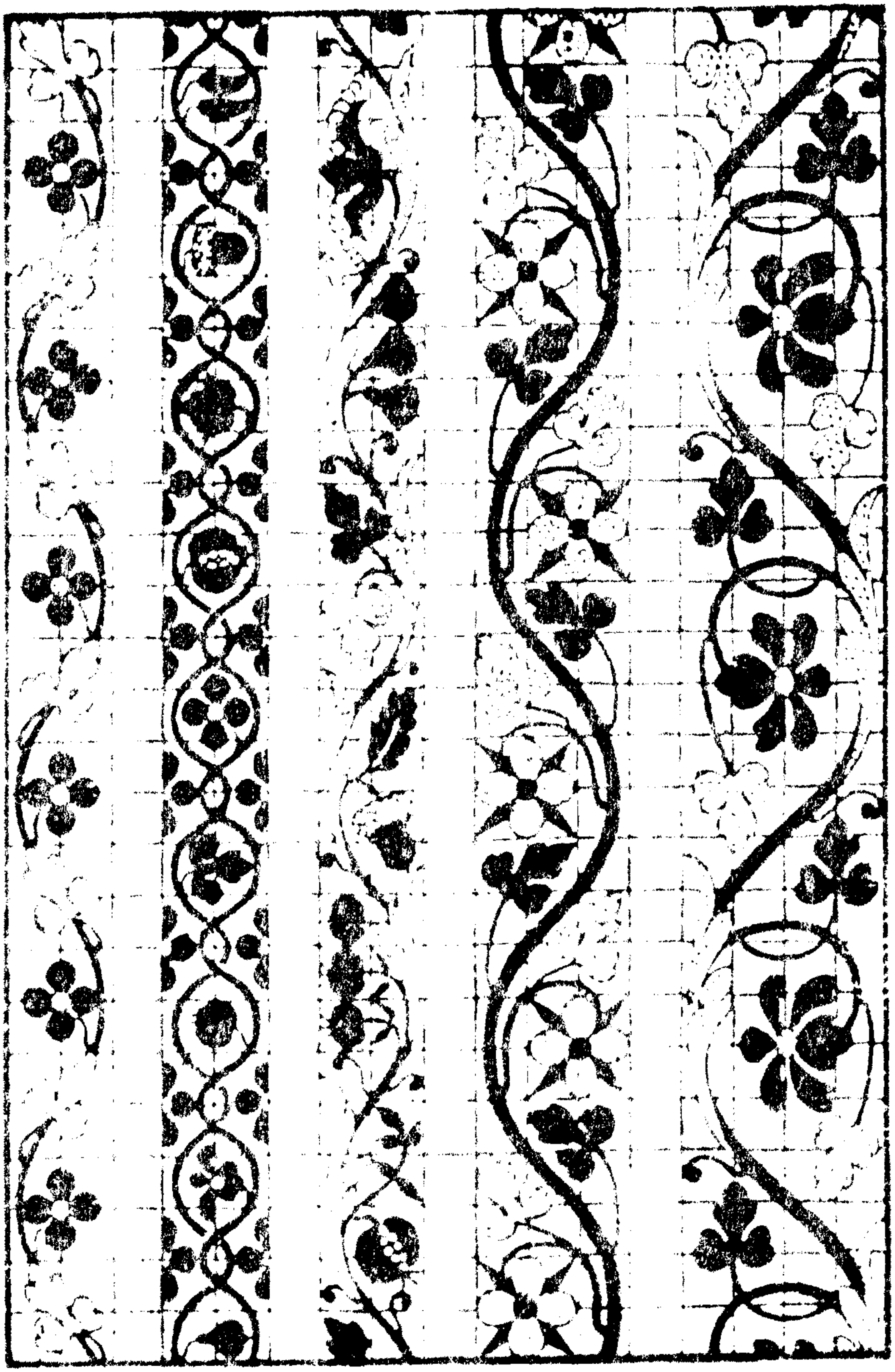
Anima pellegrina, alma & serena,
La cui beltà, con la uirtute unita,
Mostra a mortali una piu degna uita,
Ch'à commendarti ogn'intelletto mena.
LVCRETIA de Priuli, ornata, & piena
D'ogni bontade, in te quasi infinita,
La quale ad honorarti il cor m'inuita,
Con quanto puo mia industria, & debol uena.
Qui l'ingegno donnesco, oltre se stesso
Leuerassi, per far con l'ago, quanto
Da Poeta ò Pittor mai fusse espresso.
Quì si uedrà, che s'assomiglia tanto
La donna al Creator, fingendo spesso
Le uere cose, & la figura, e'l manto.

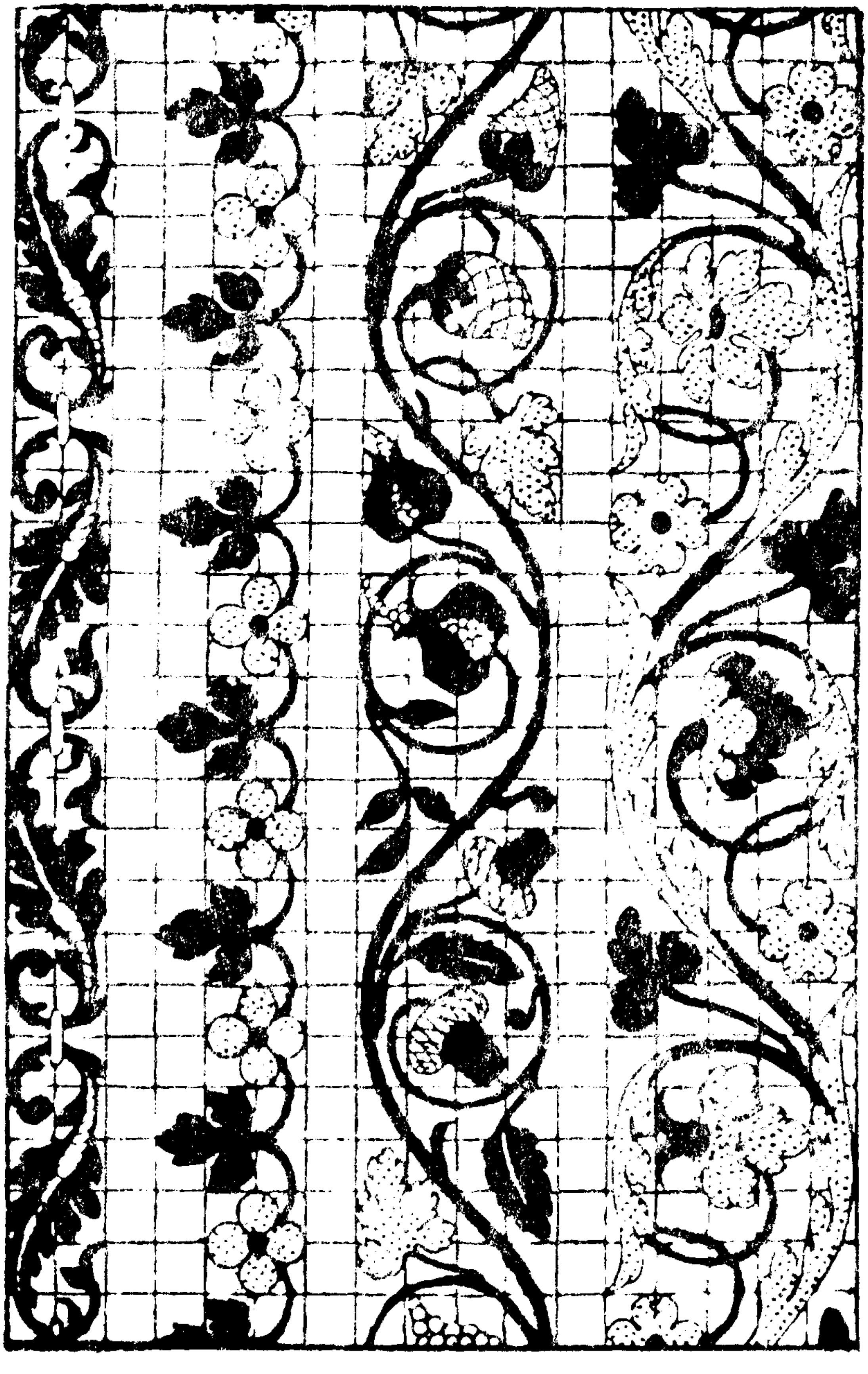
Sonetto alle saggie, & uirtuose Donne, à commendatione del Libro.

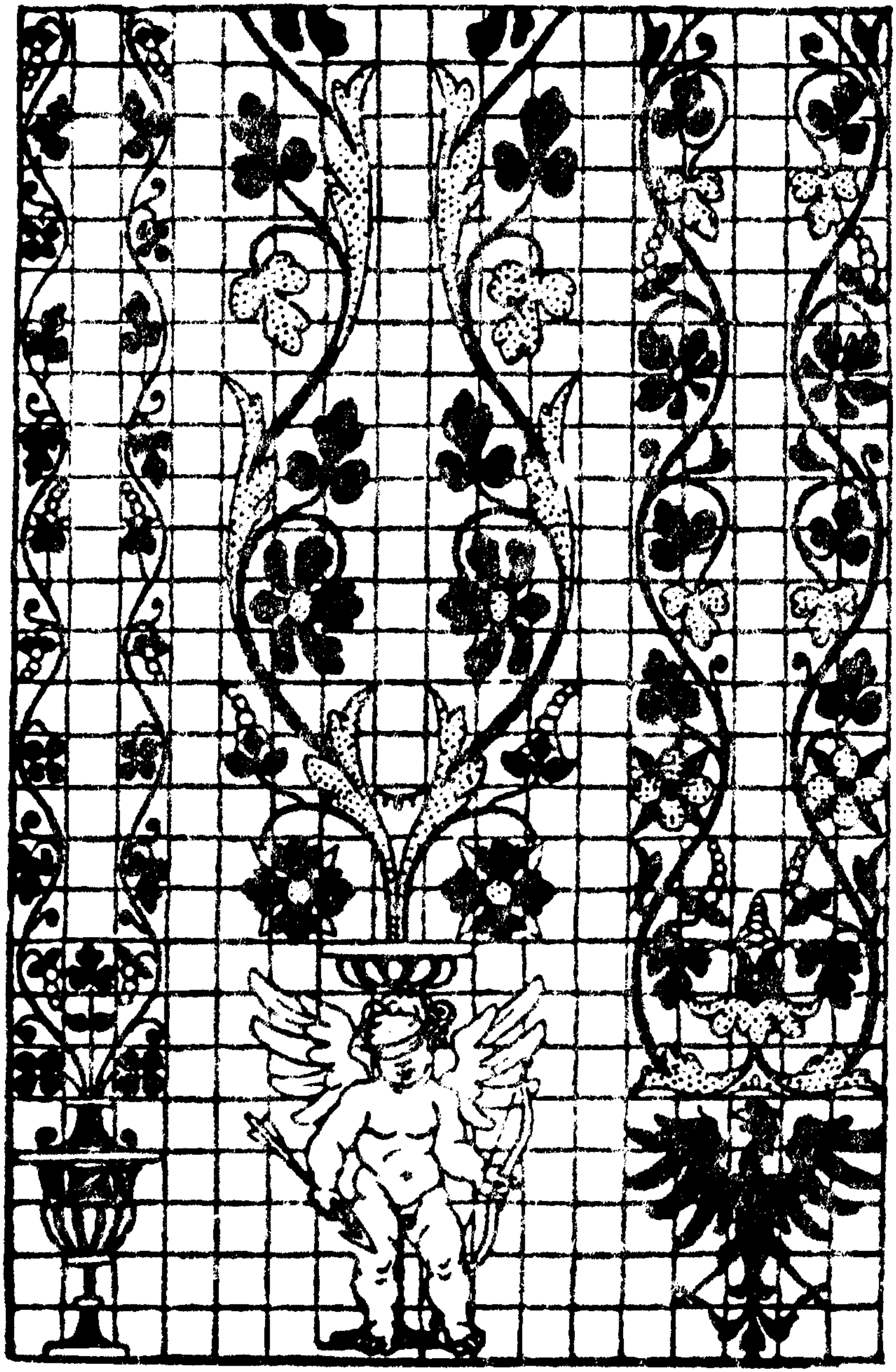
Leggiadre donne, & uoi saggie donzelle,
A cui uirtute il cuor sempre innamora,
Porgoui quel, che l'alma ui colora
D'ingegno, & fauui à Pallade sorelle.
Quest'è il decoro delle altere, & belle
Vostre beltadi, & non fu mai, nè fora
Piu chiara fama, perche, quest'honora
La donna, & ponla in Ciel fra l'altre stelle.
Vedrete un giusto, uago, & bel disegno,
La uarietà, la gran misura, & l'arte;
Sì, che poco più ual immortale ingegno.
Tal pompa, & gratia mostreran mie carte,
Che, per gaudio direte. ESSEMPIO degno,
Cent'occhi hauesse almen, per contemplarte.

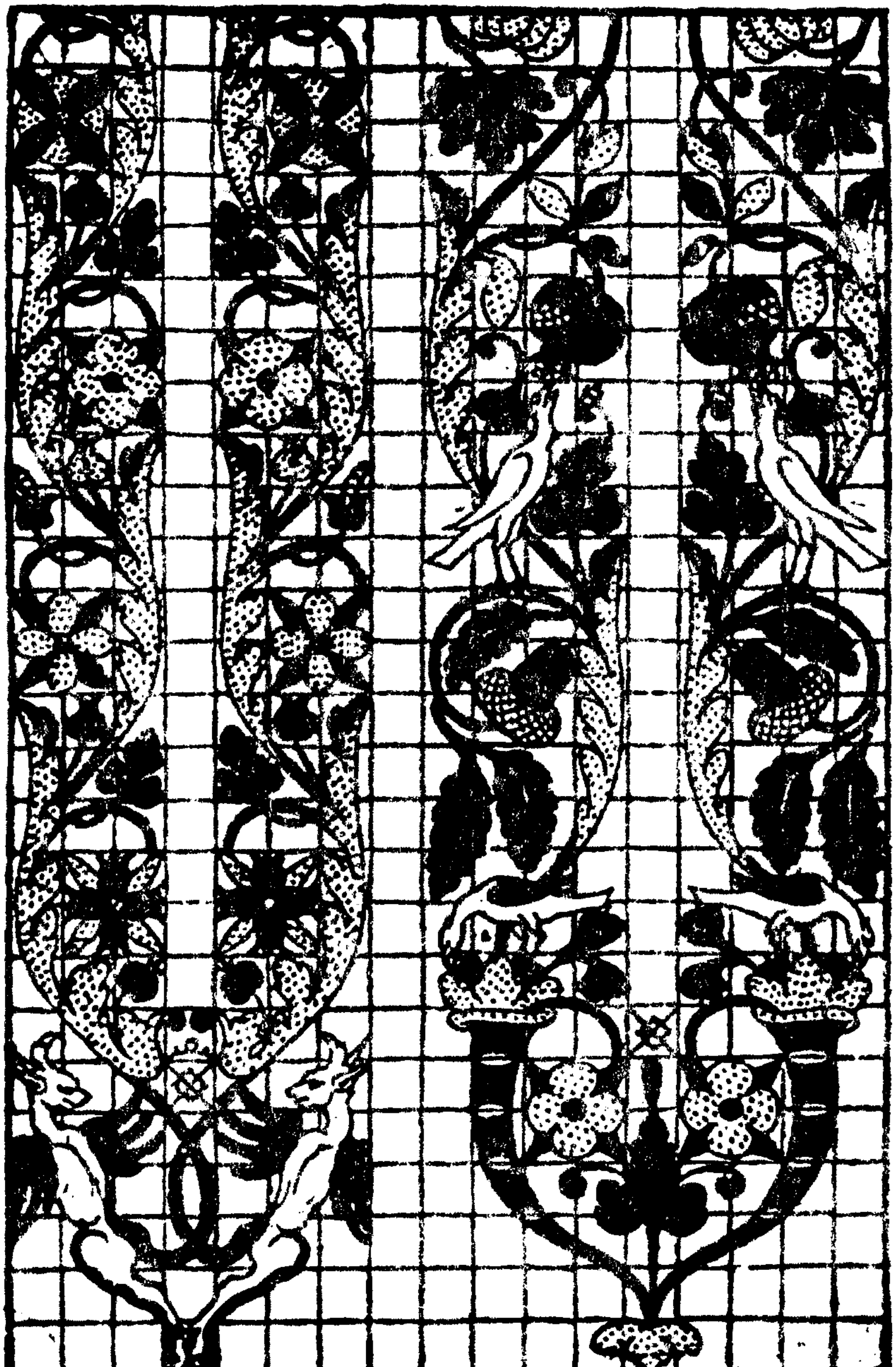
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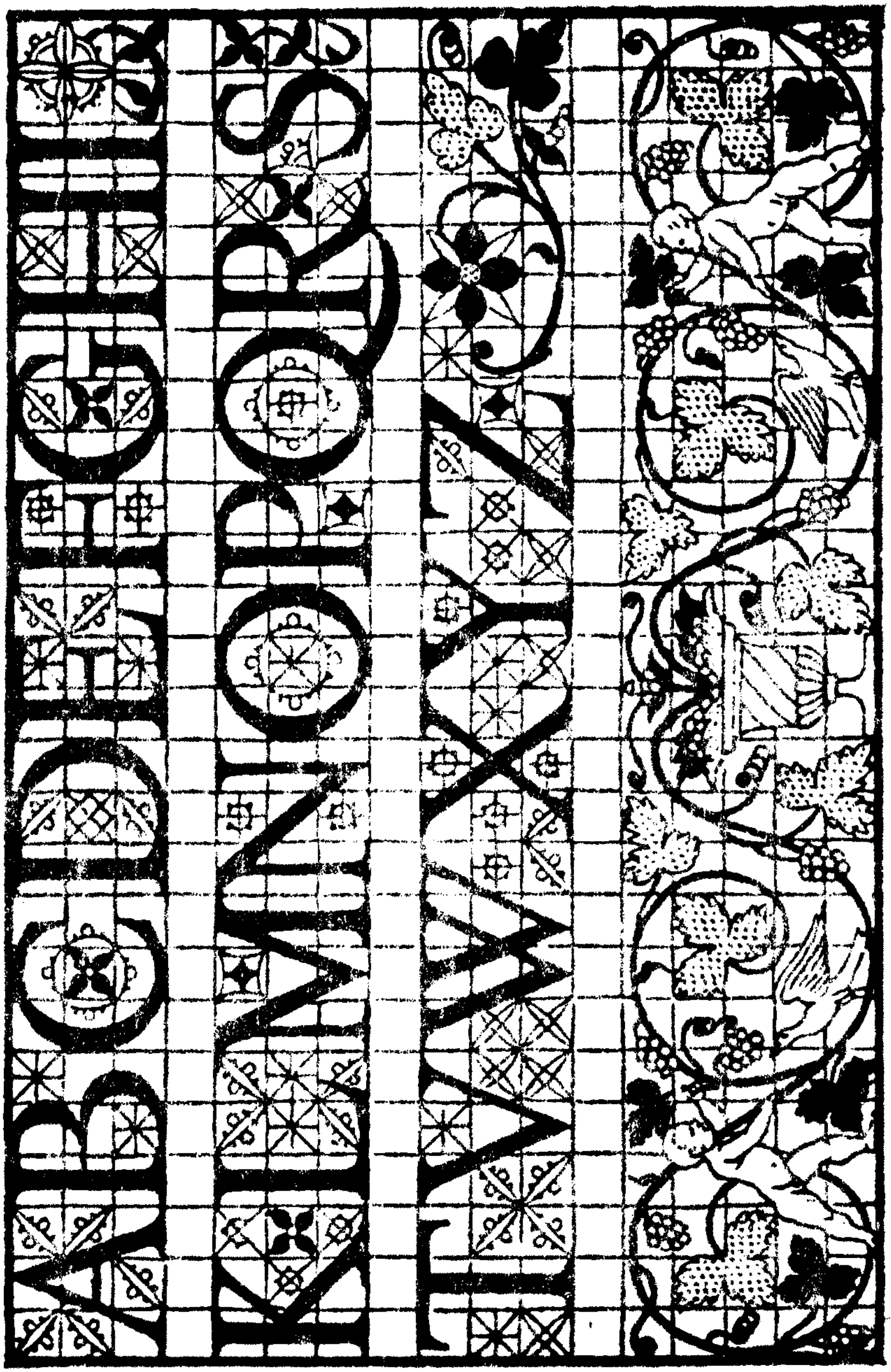




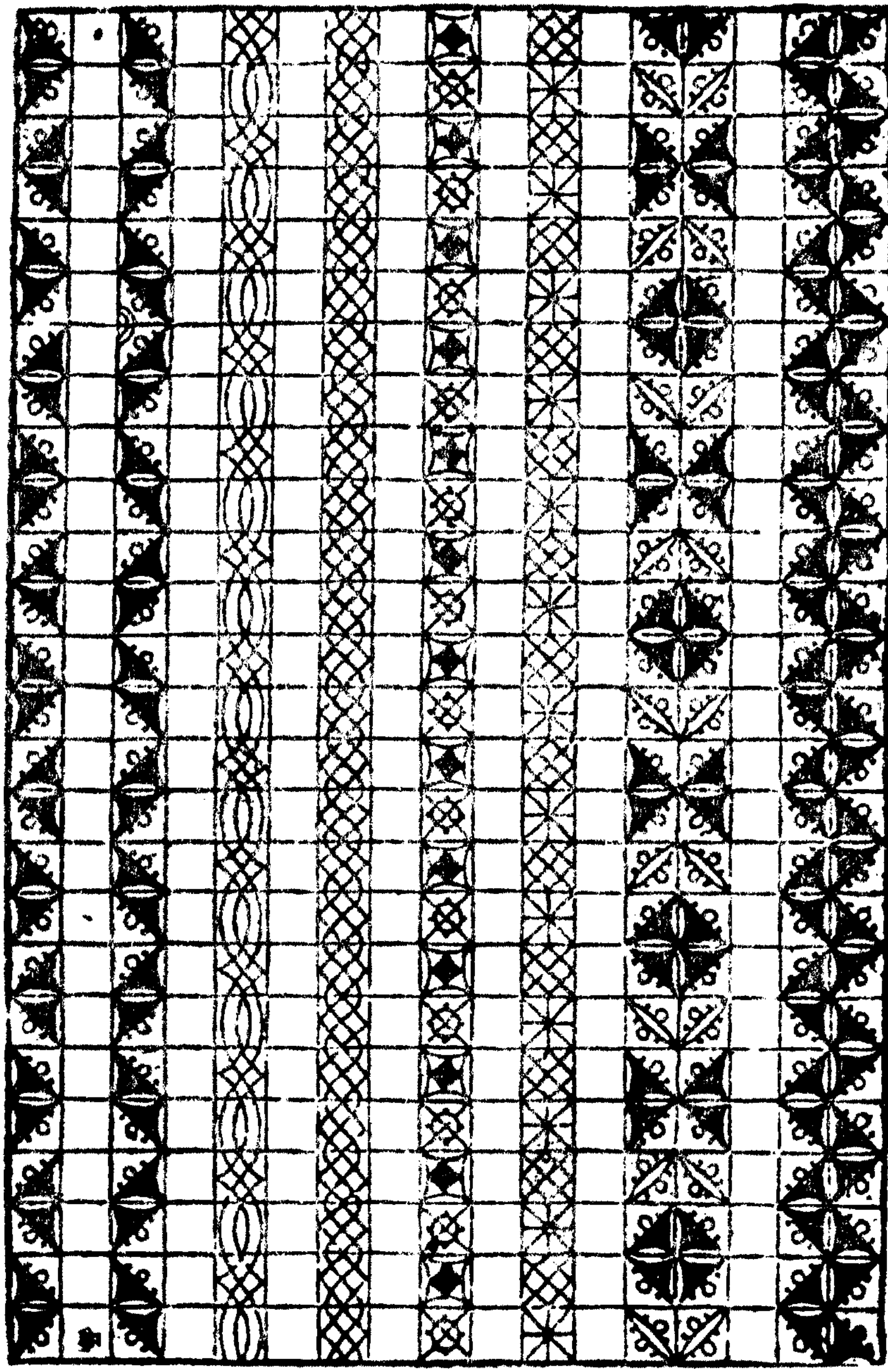


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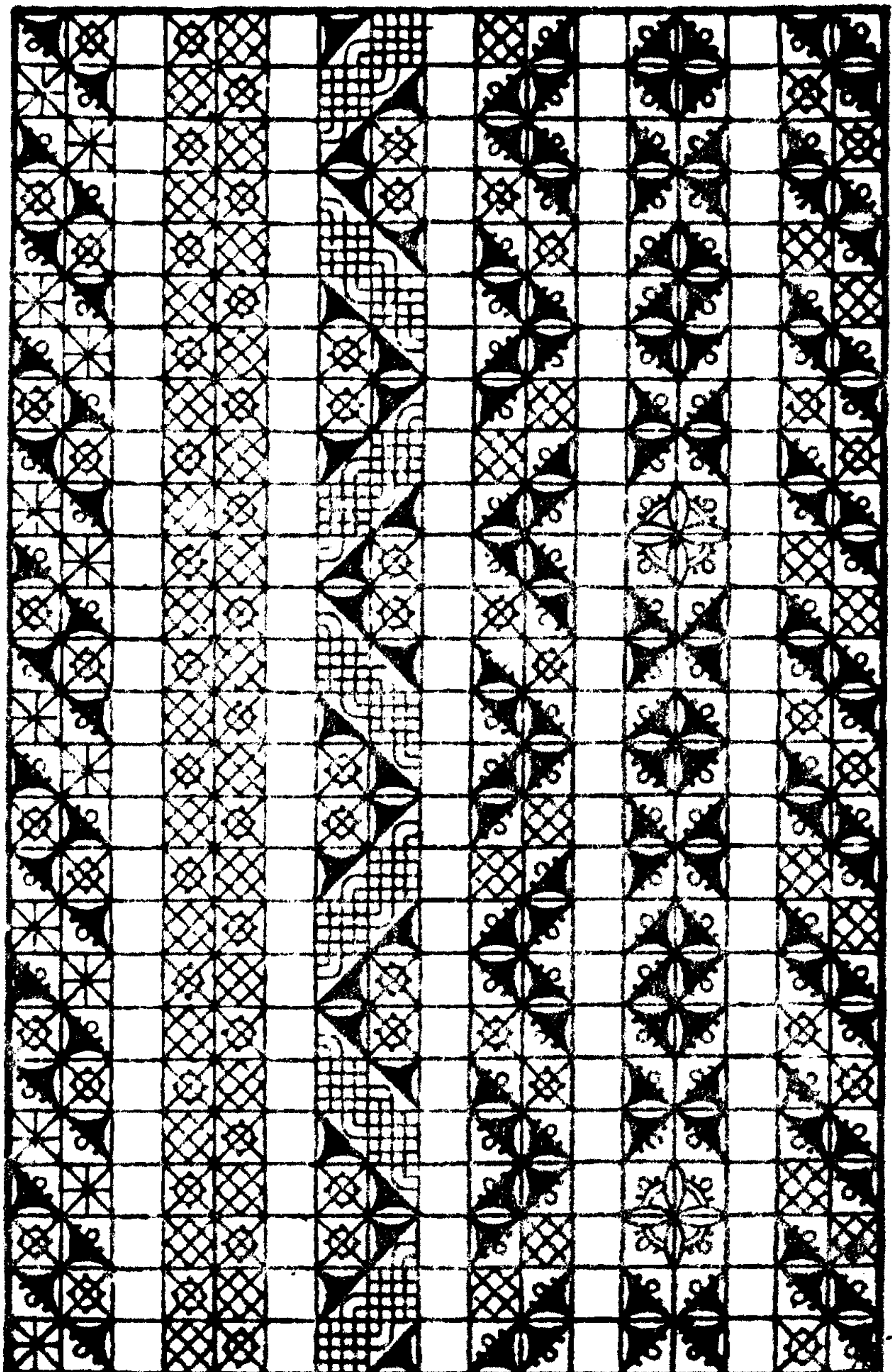
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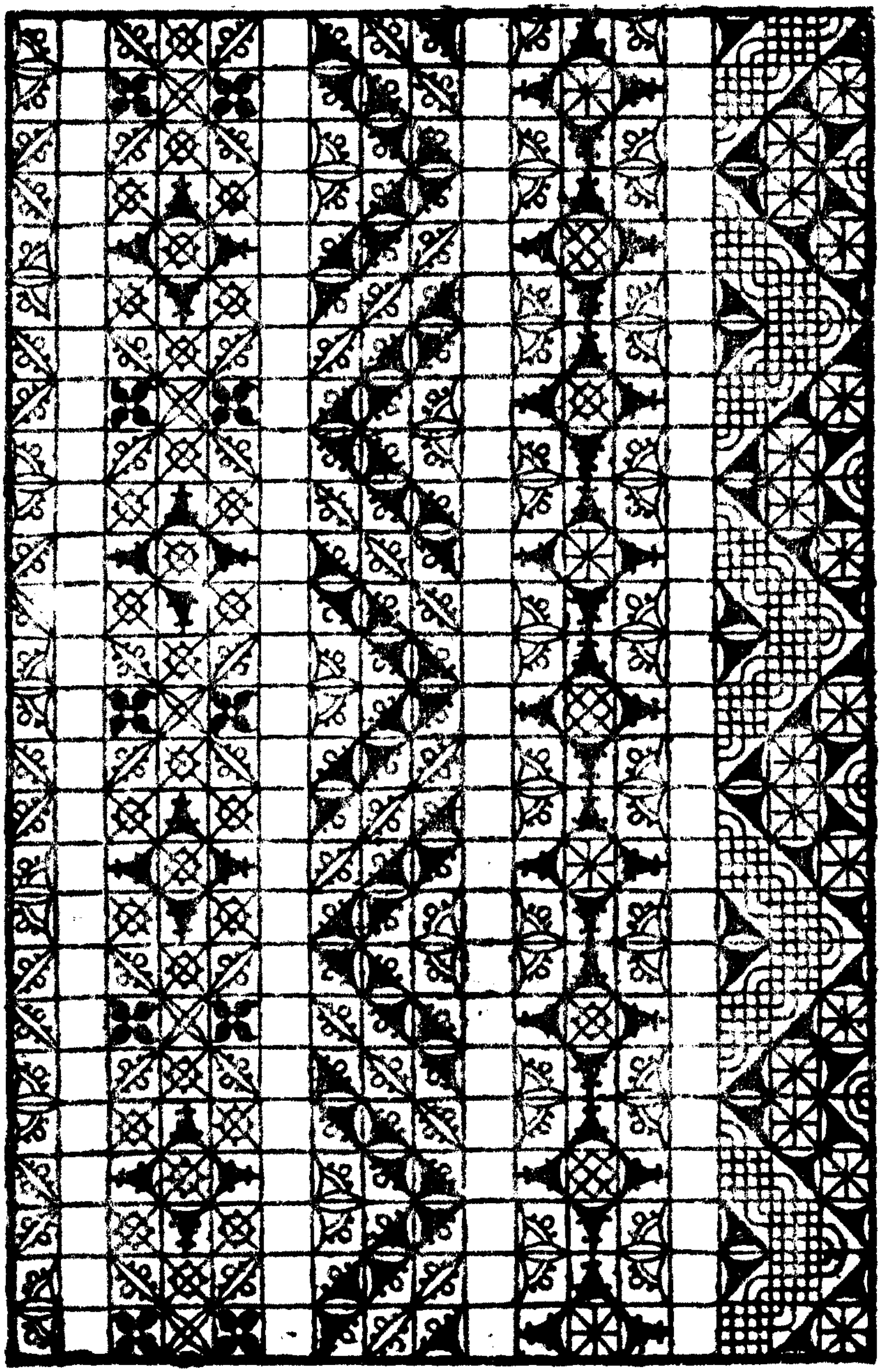
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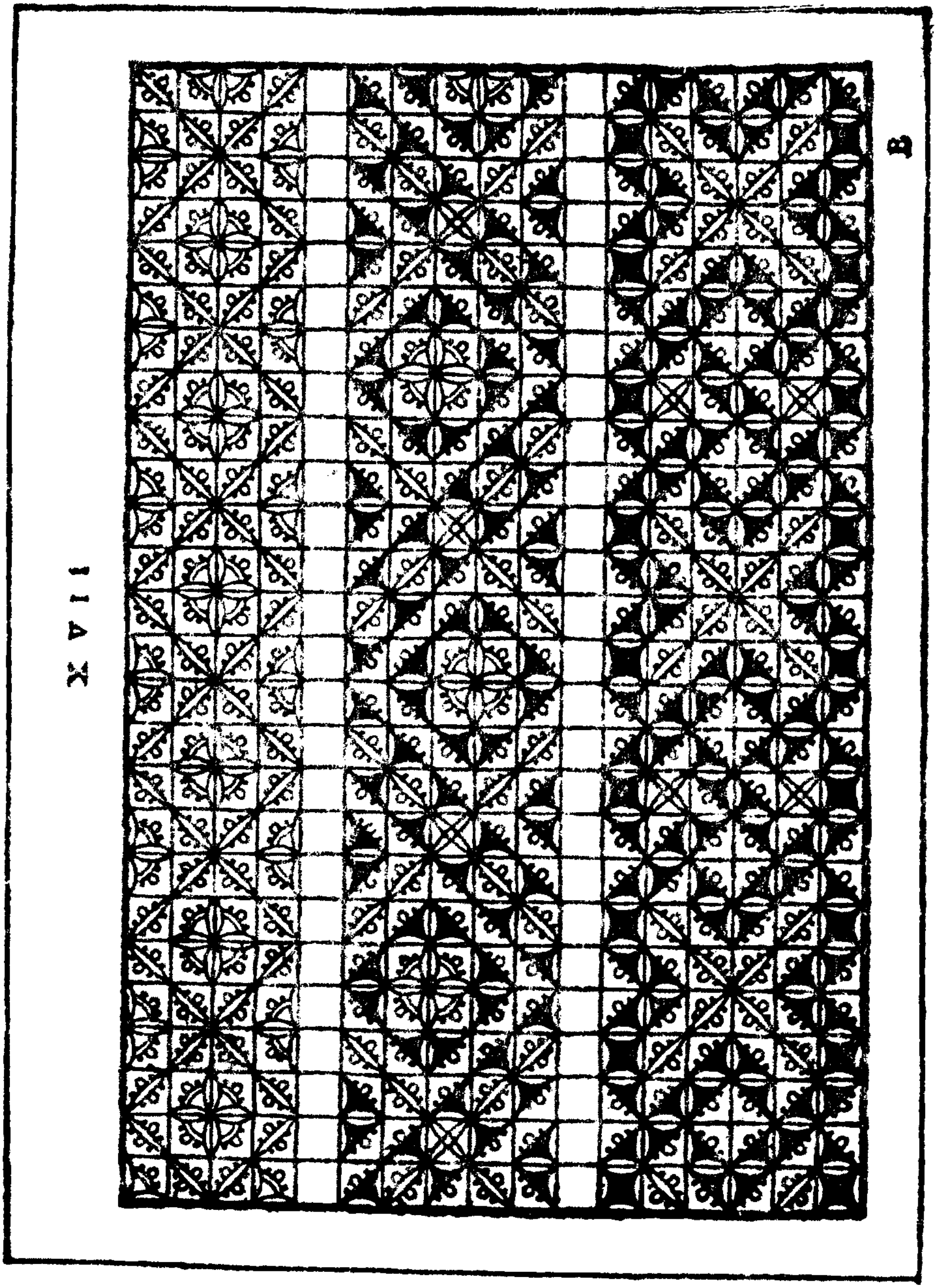


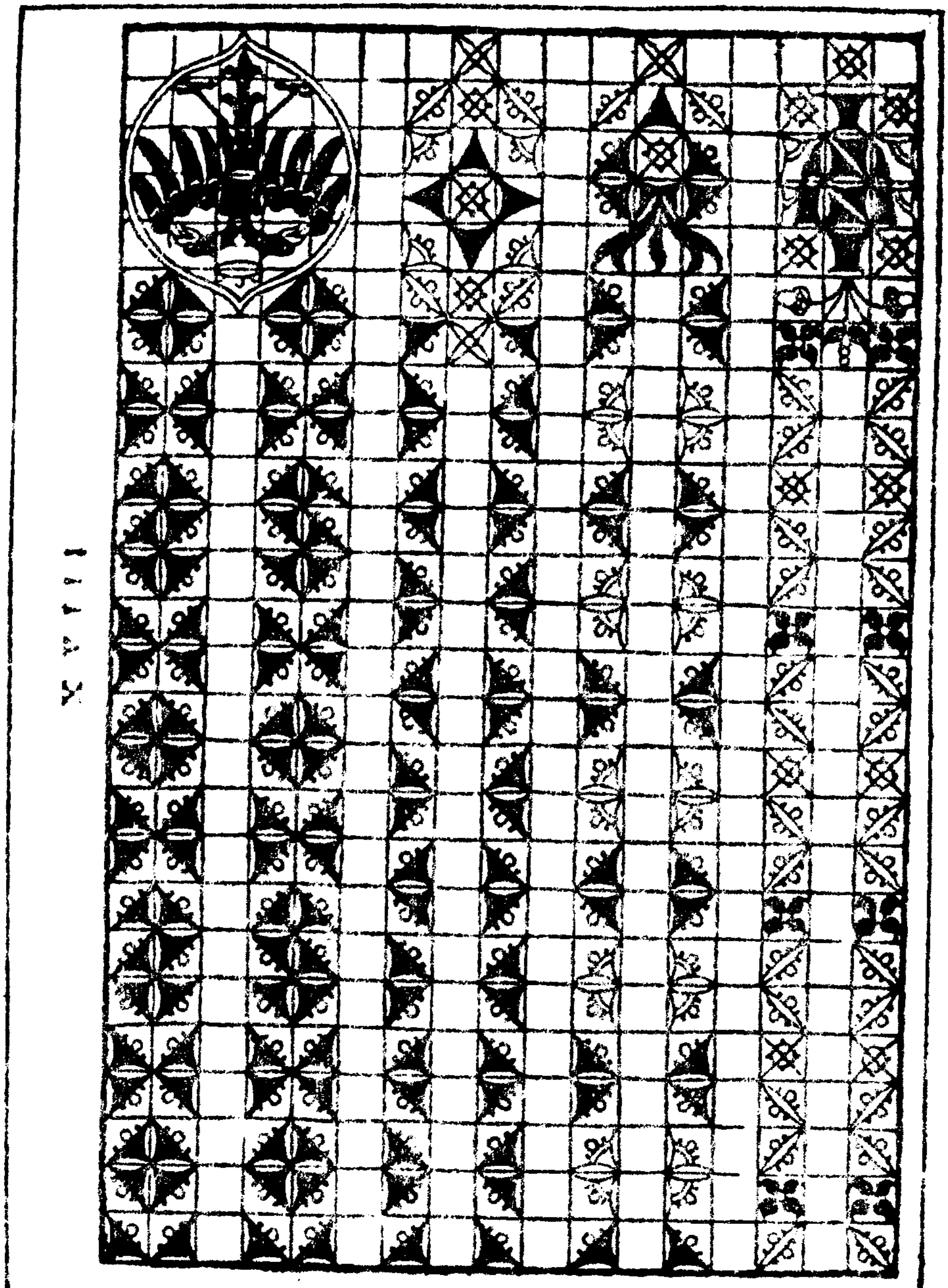
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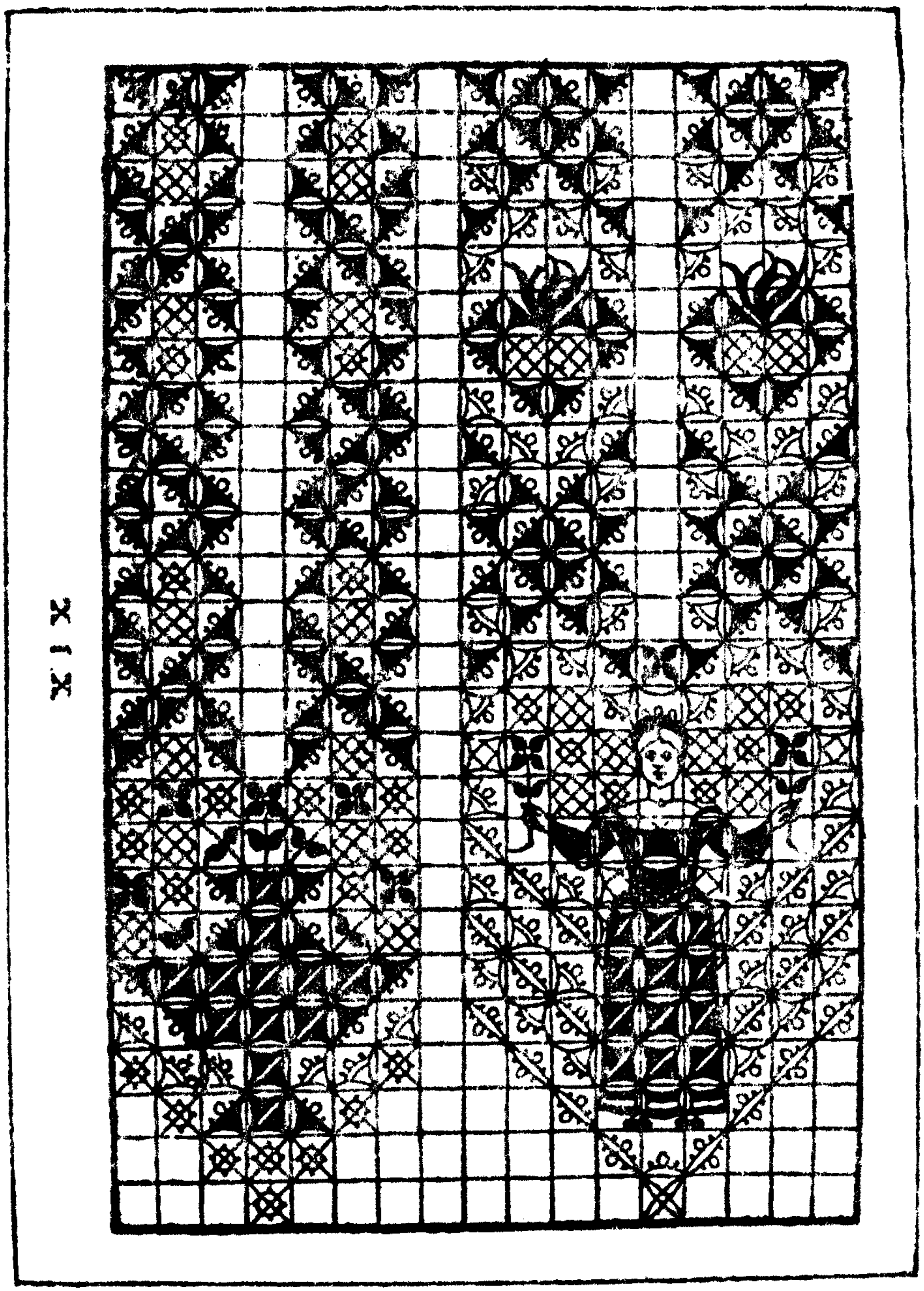


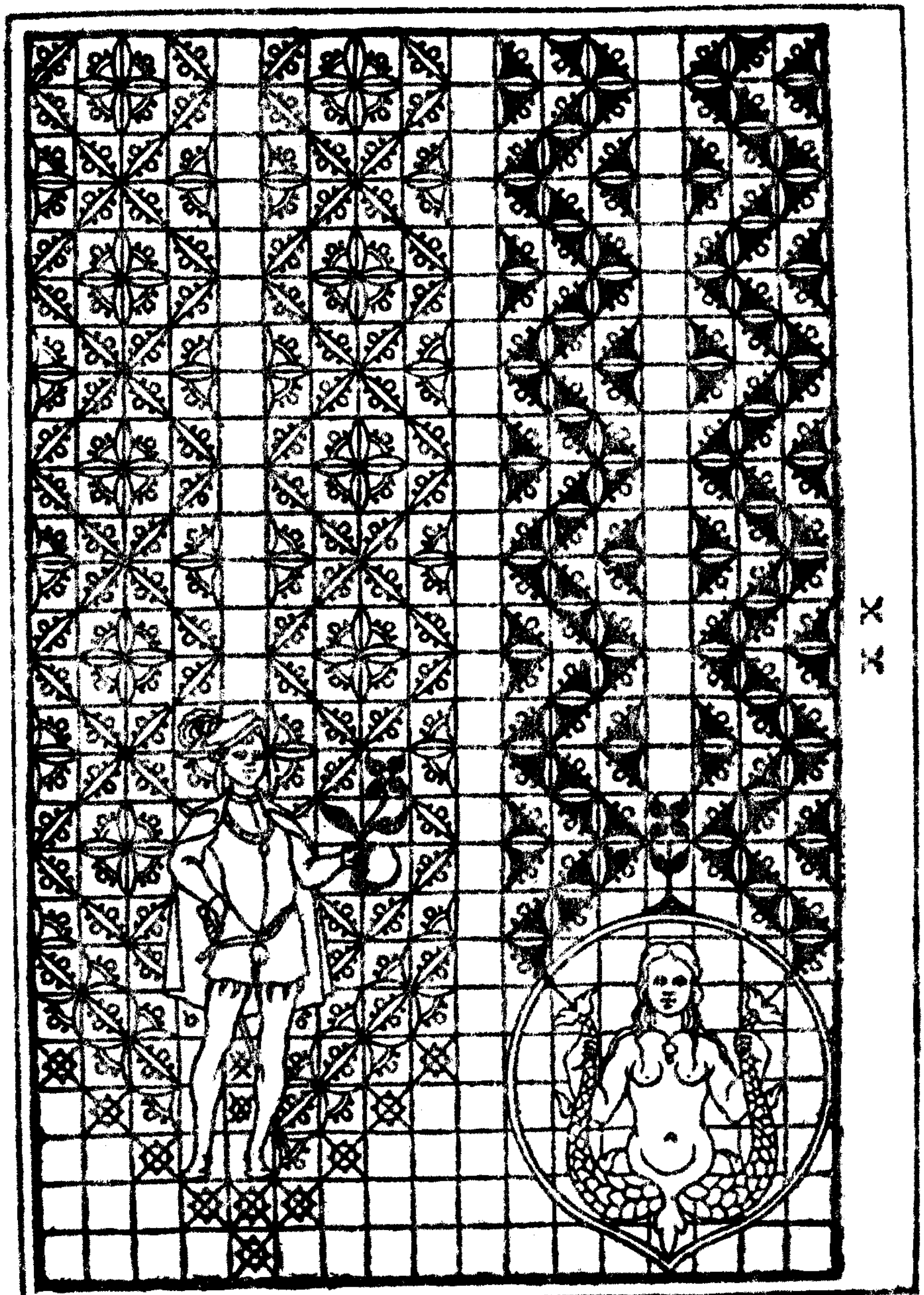
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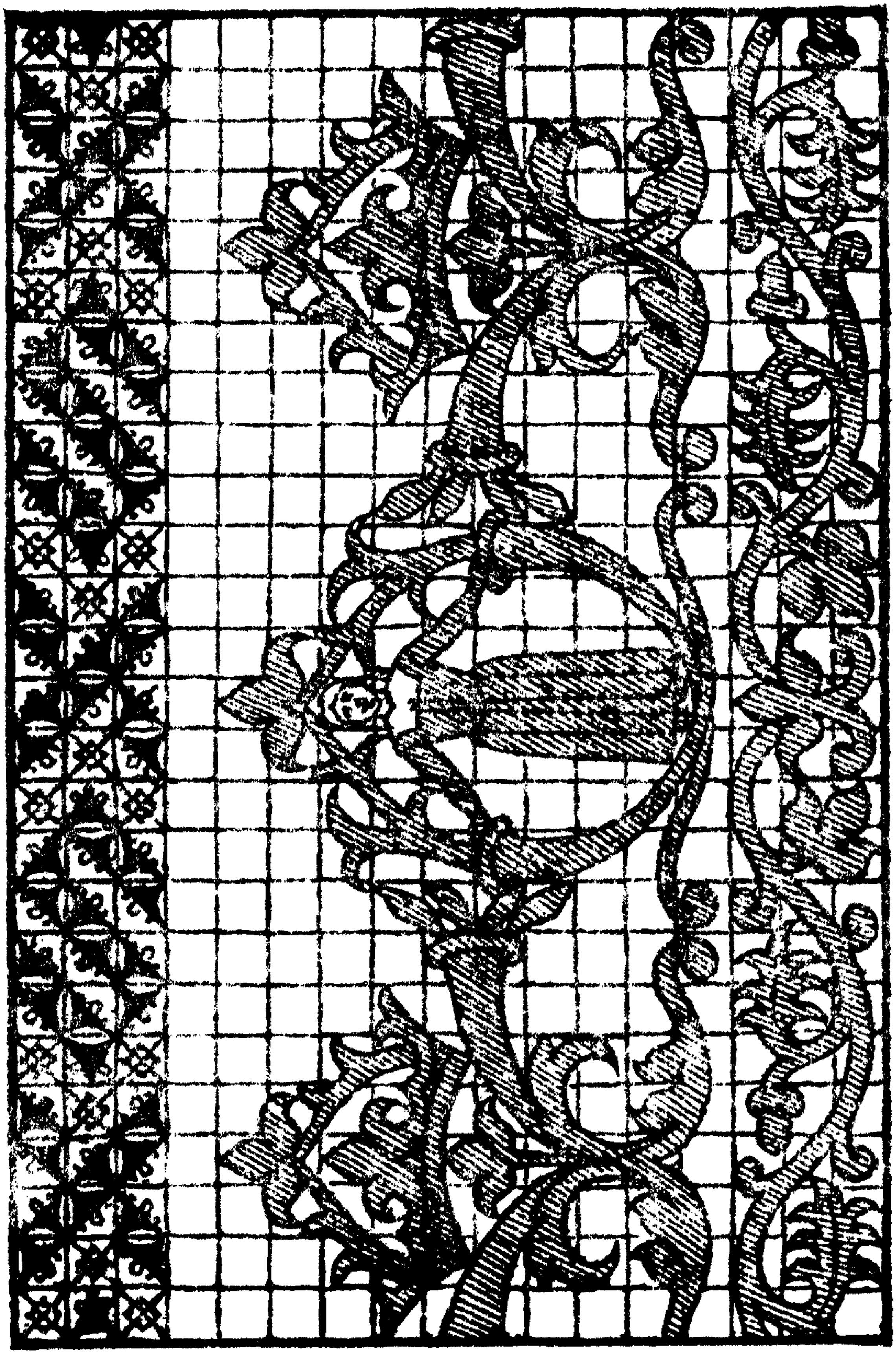


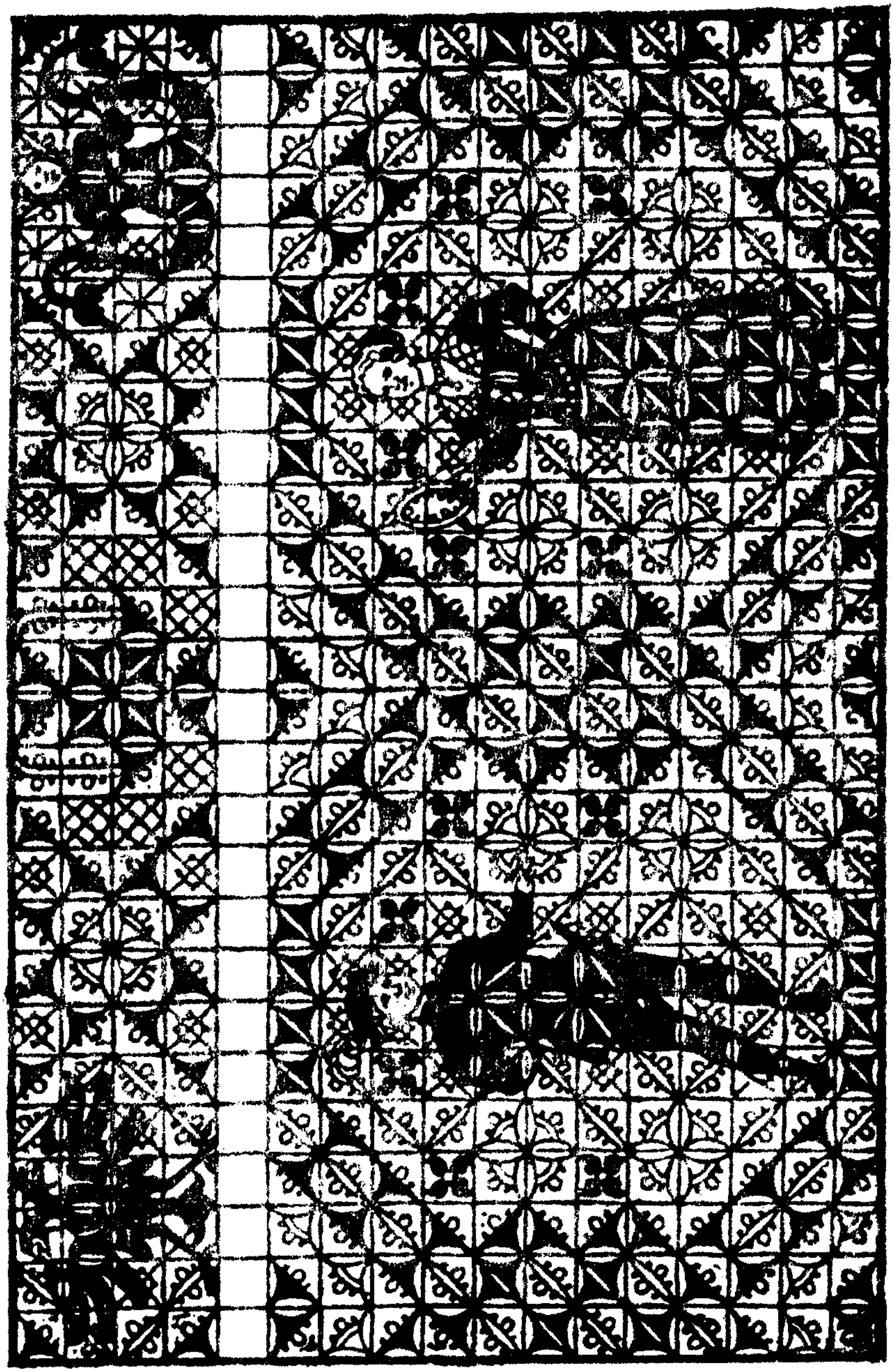



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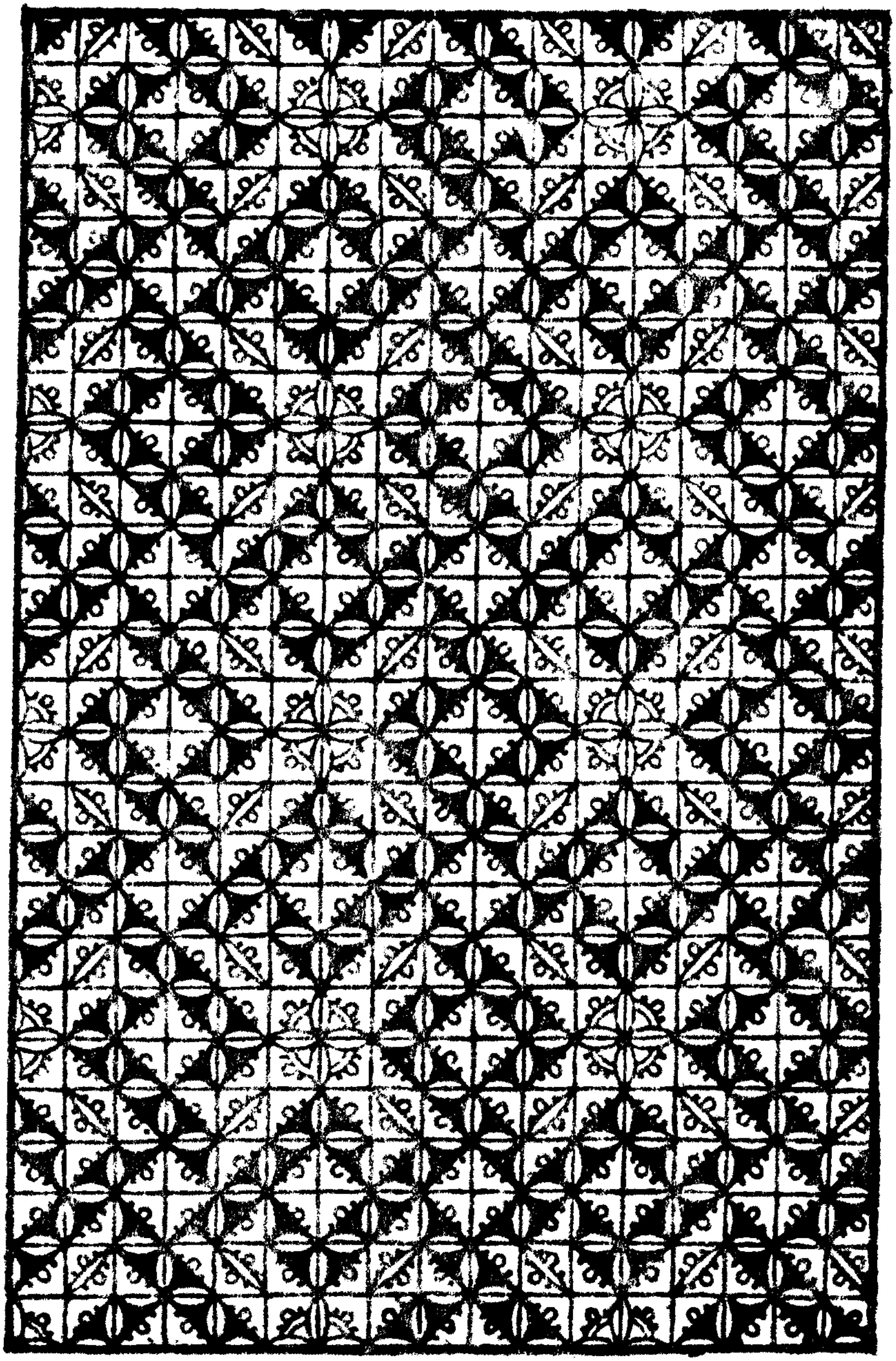
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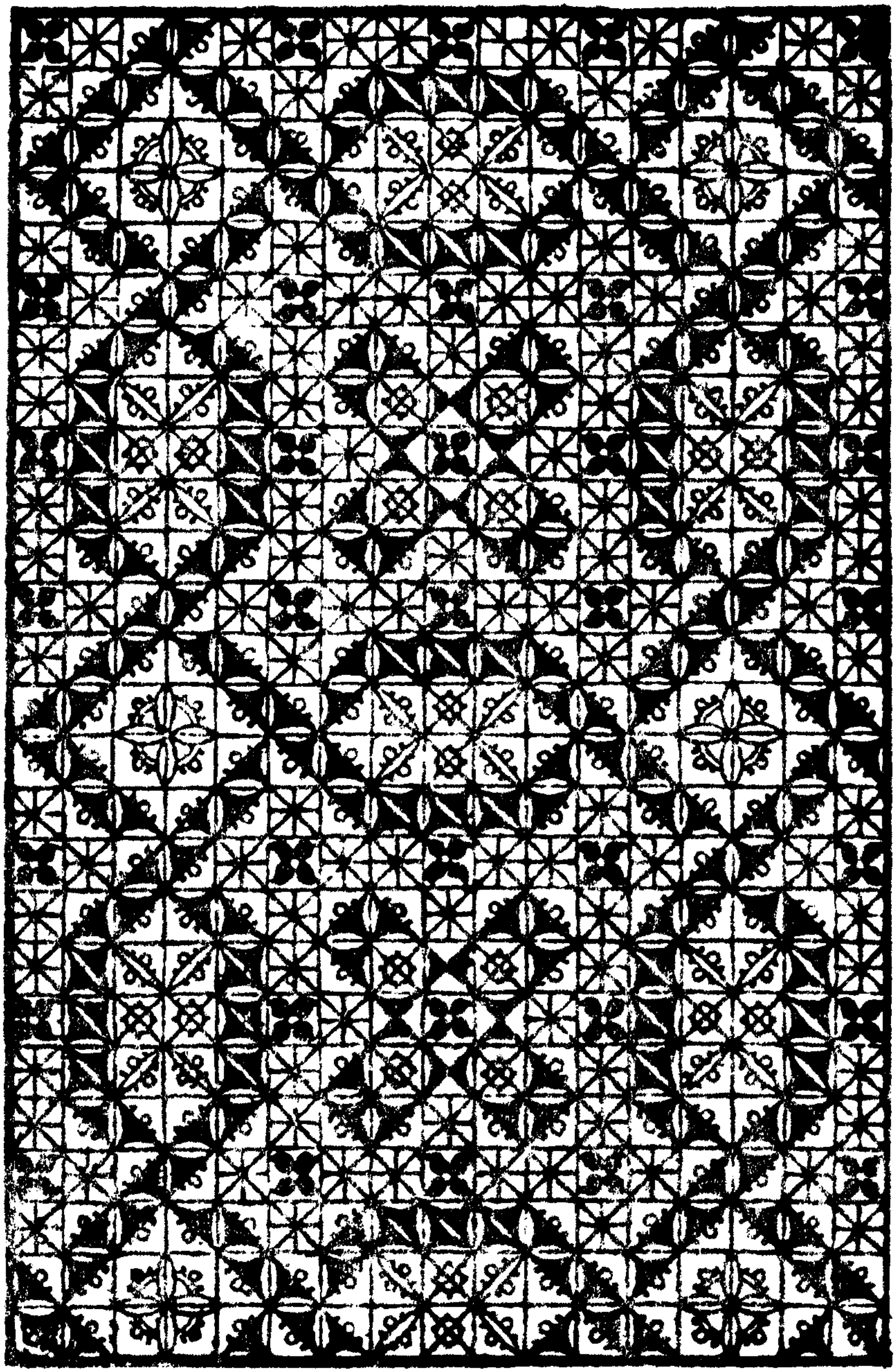


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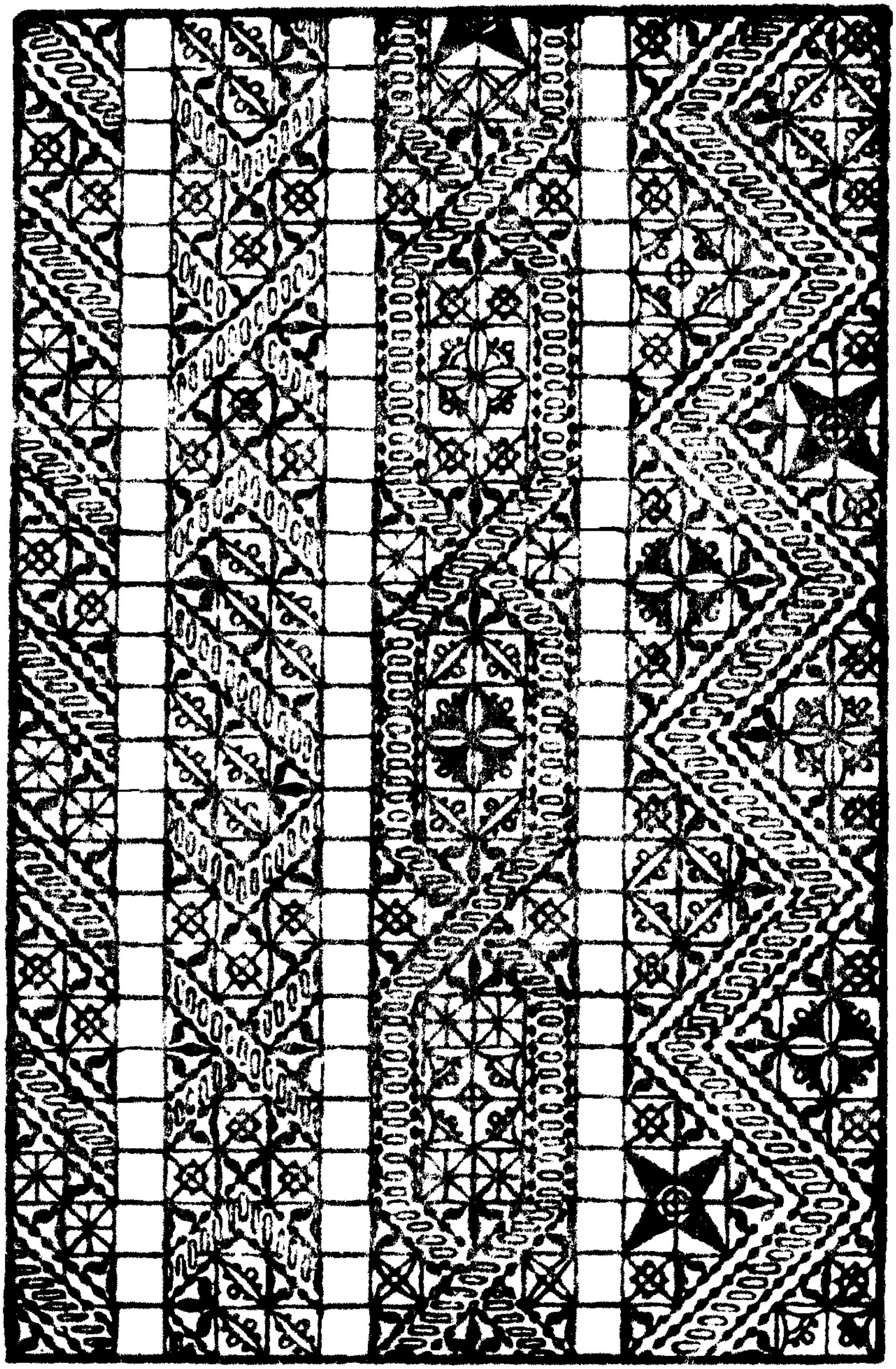
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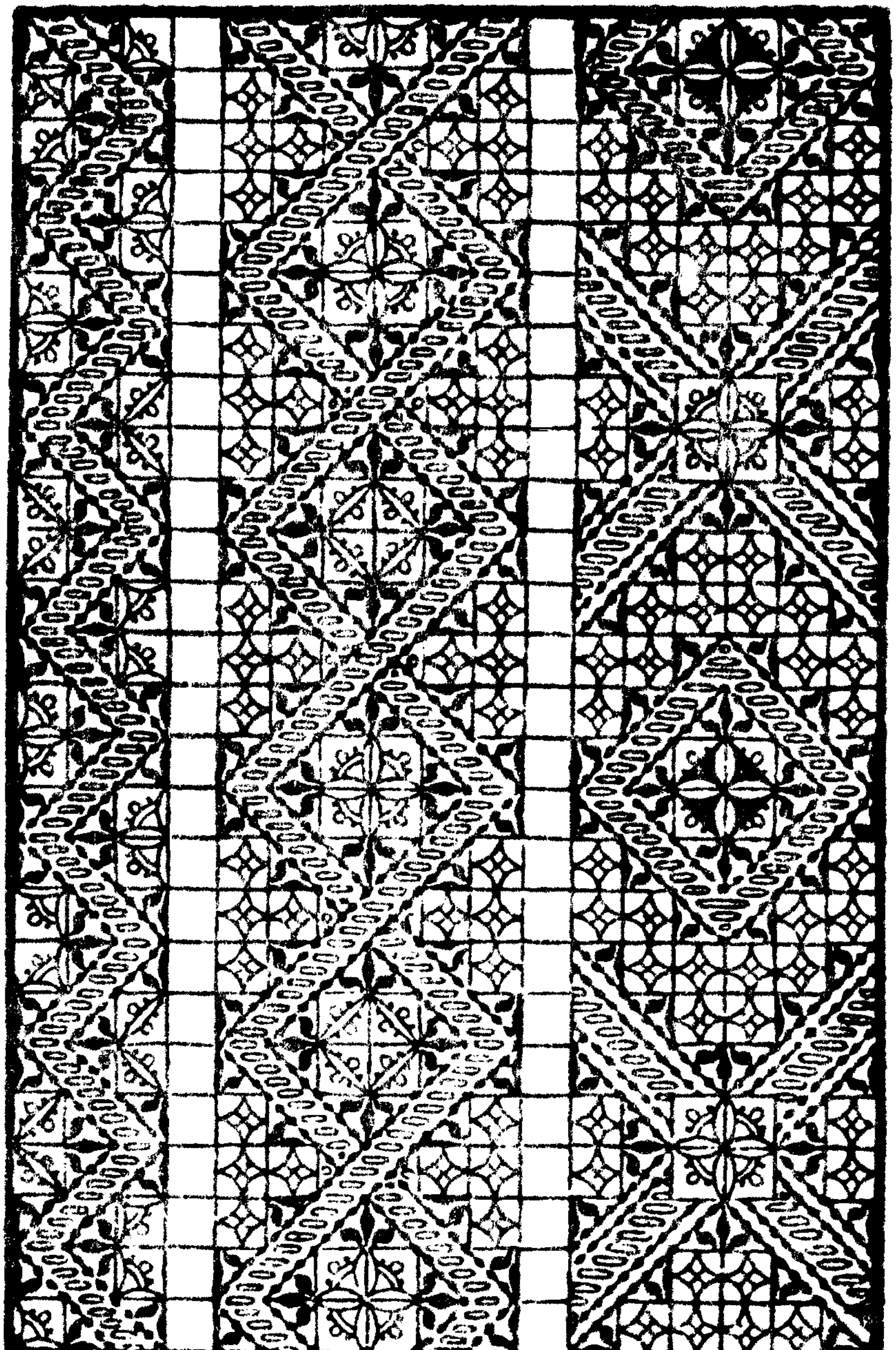


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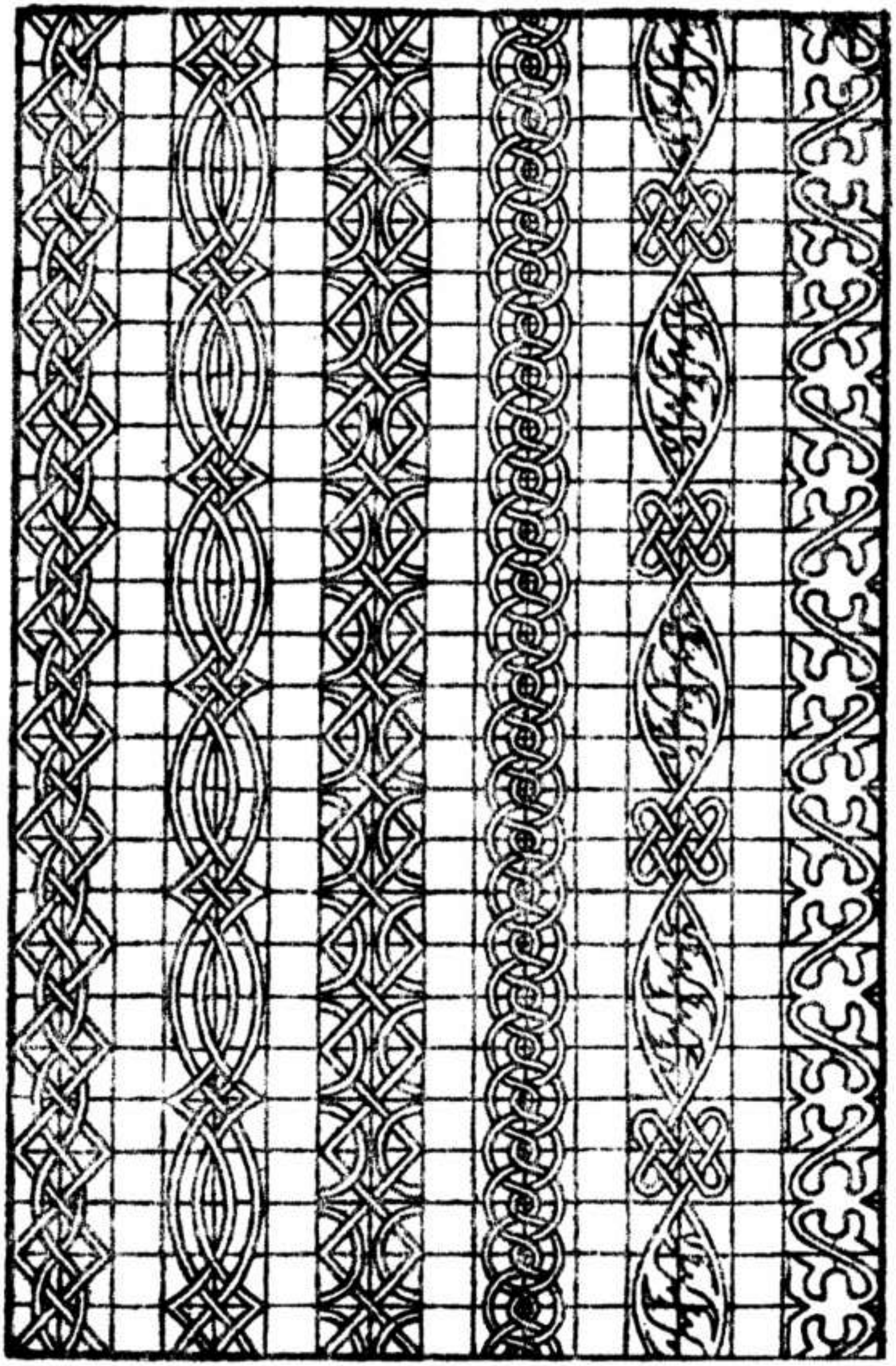
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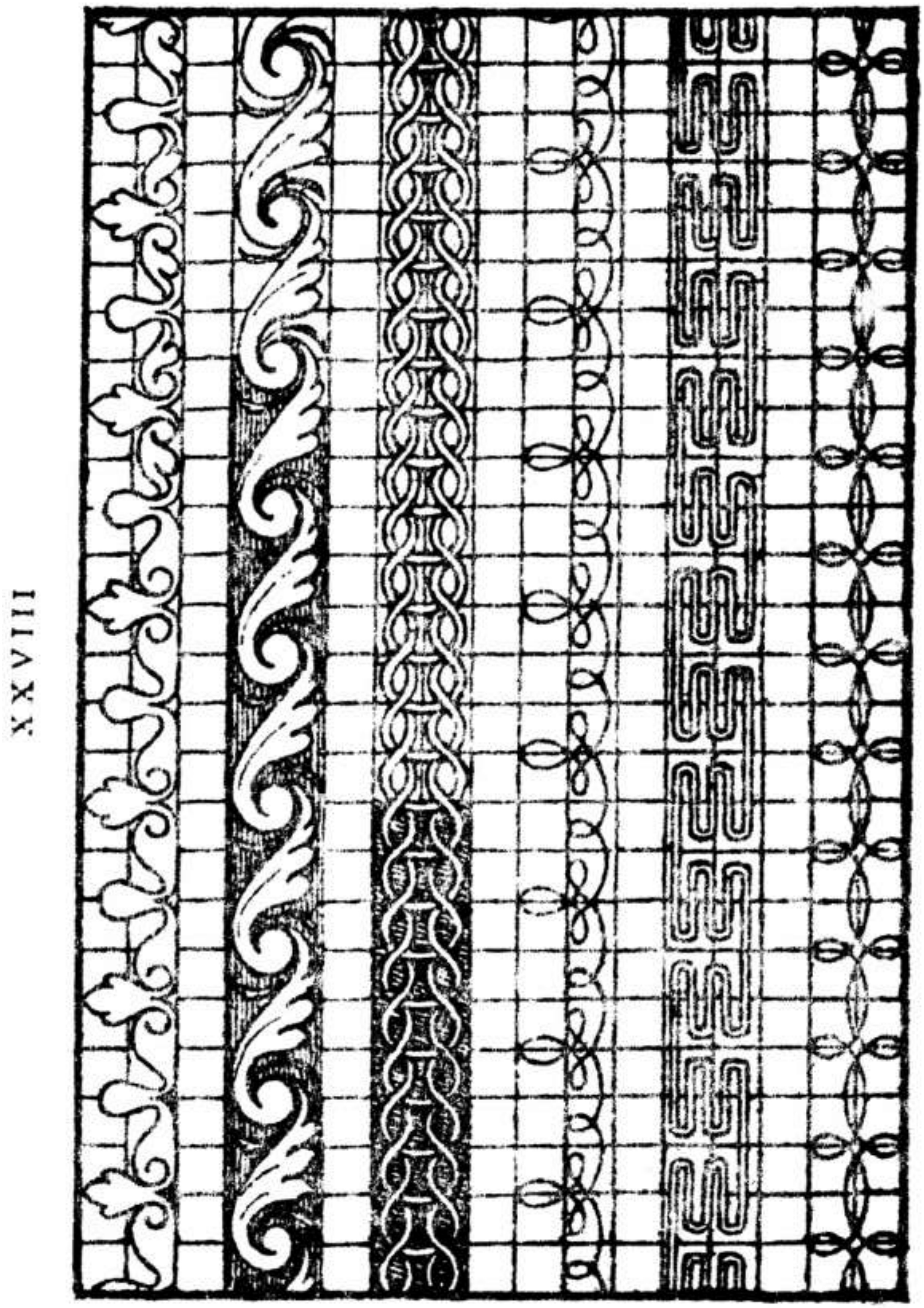


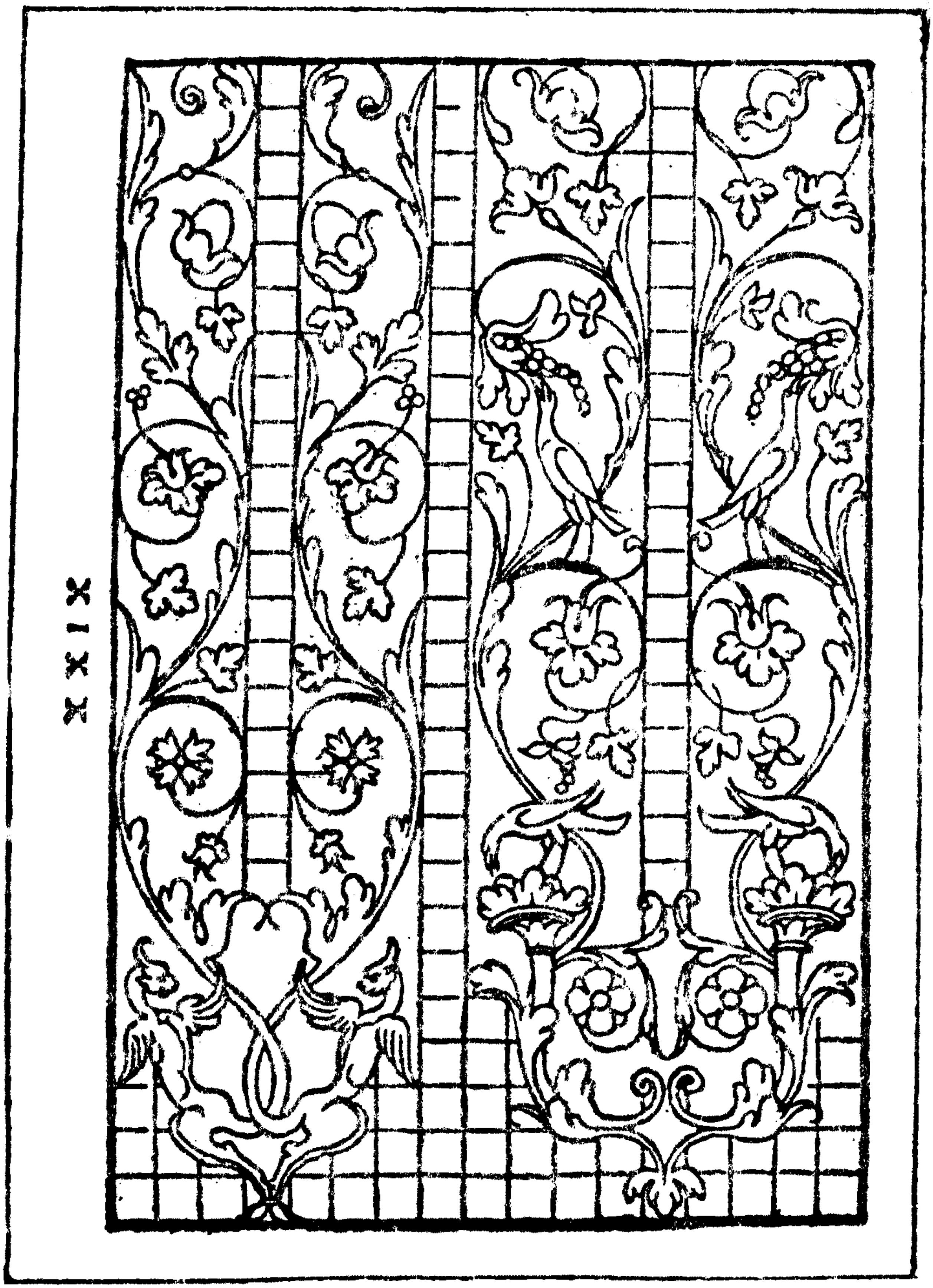


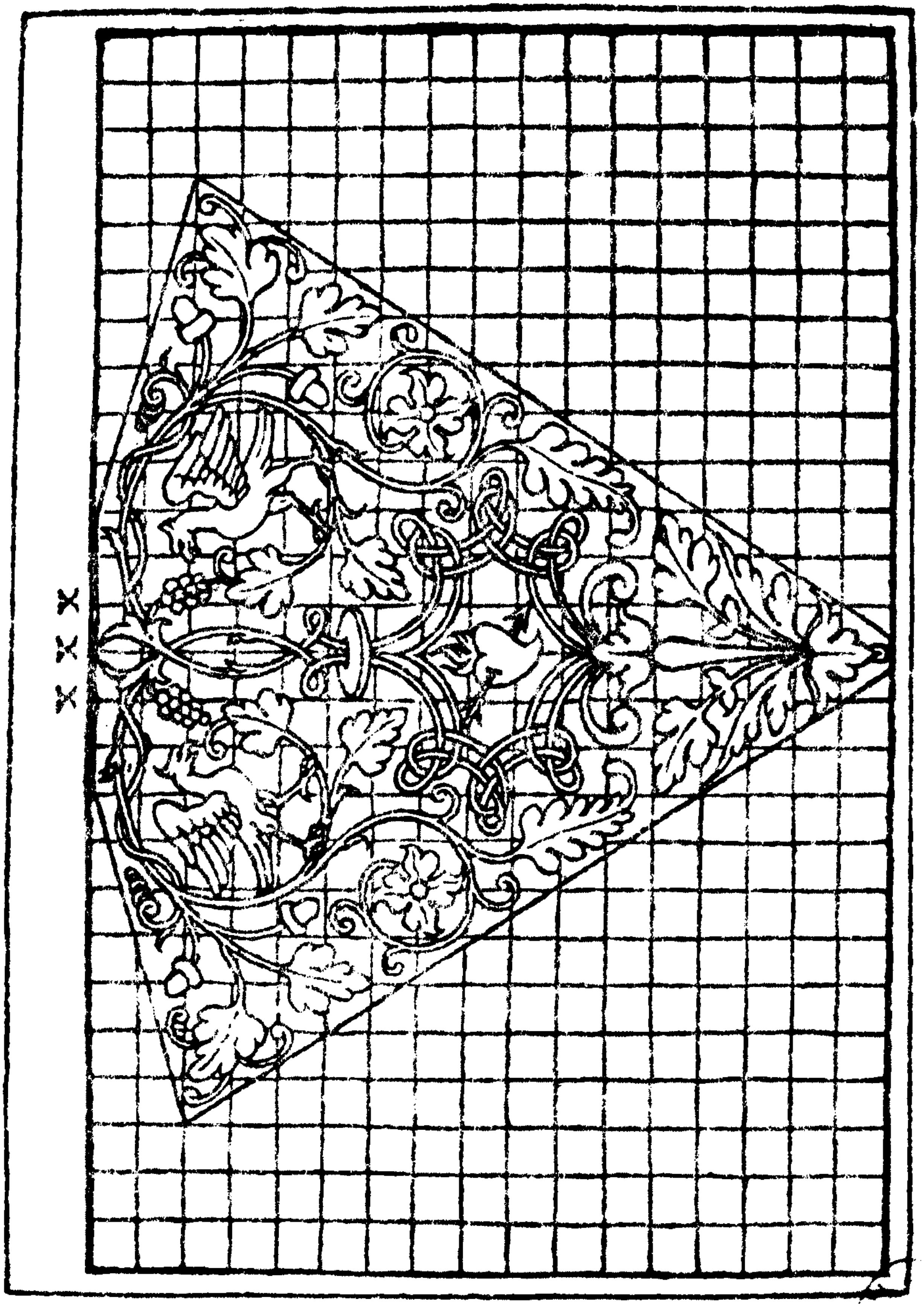
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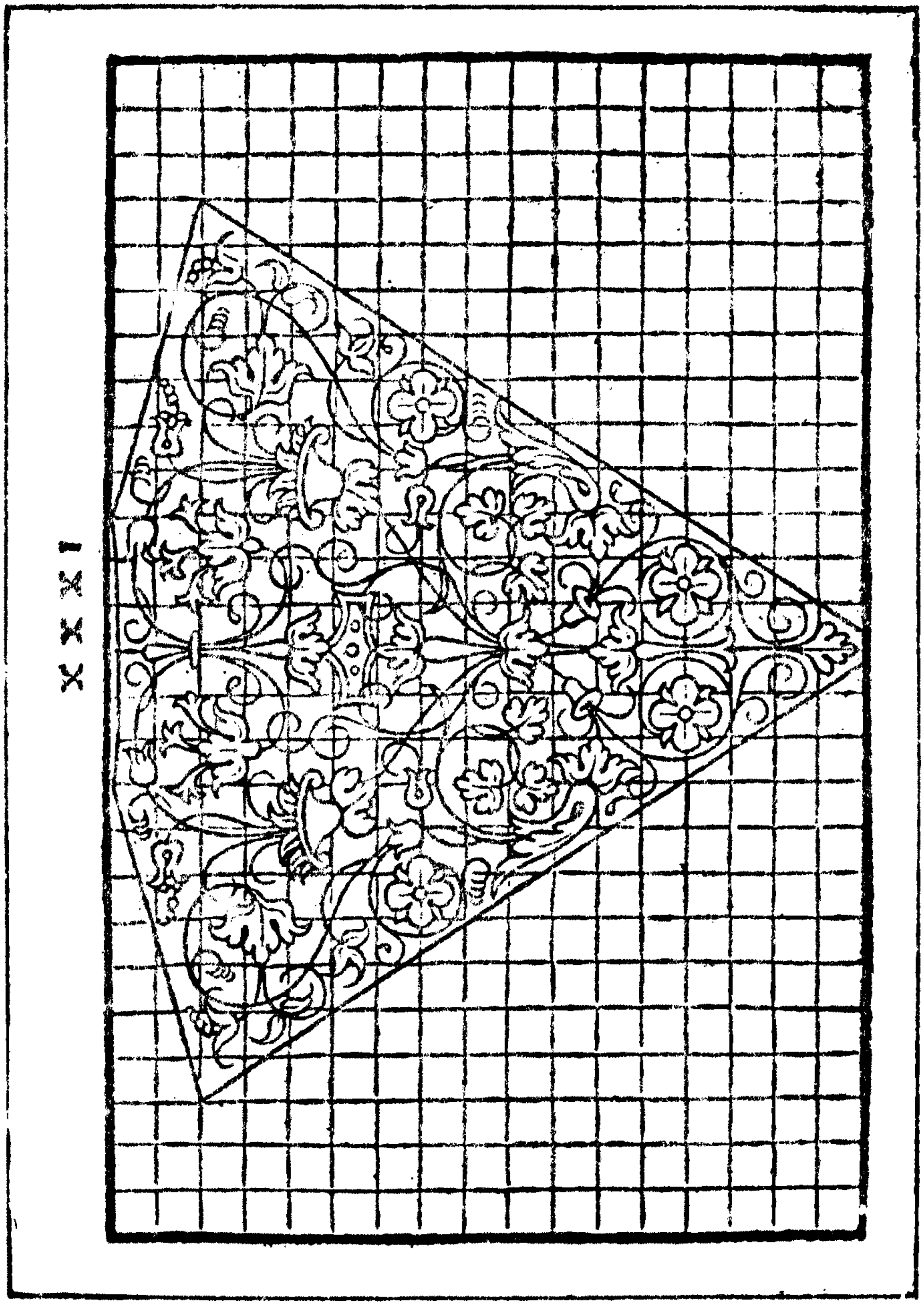
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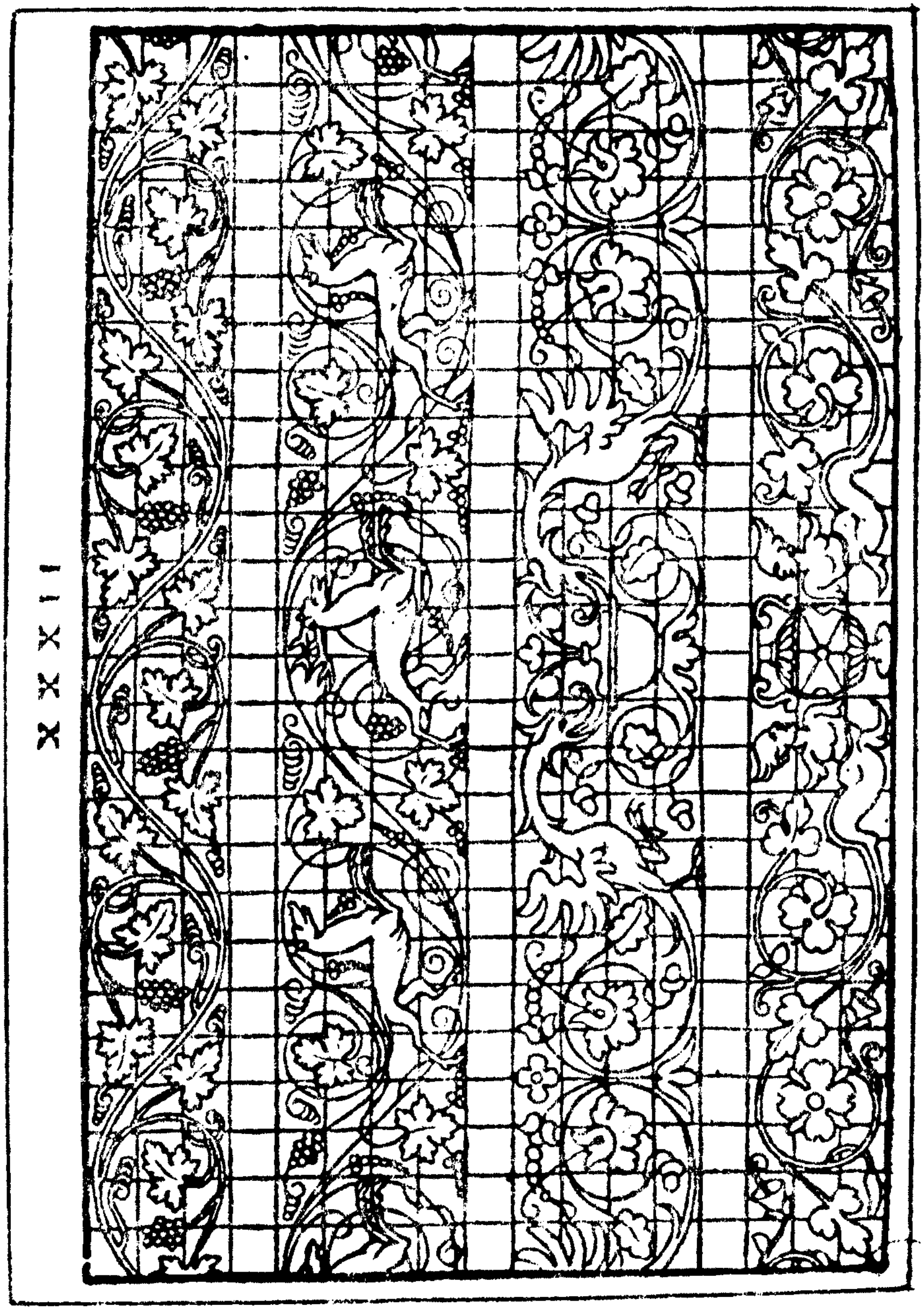


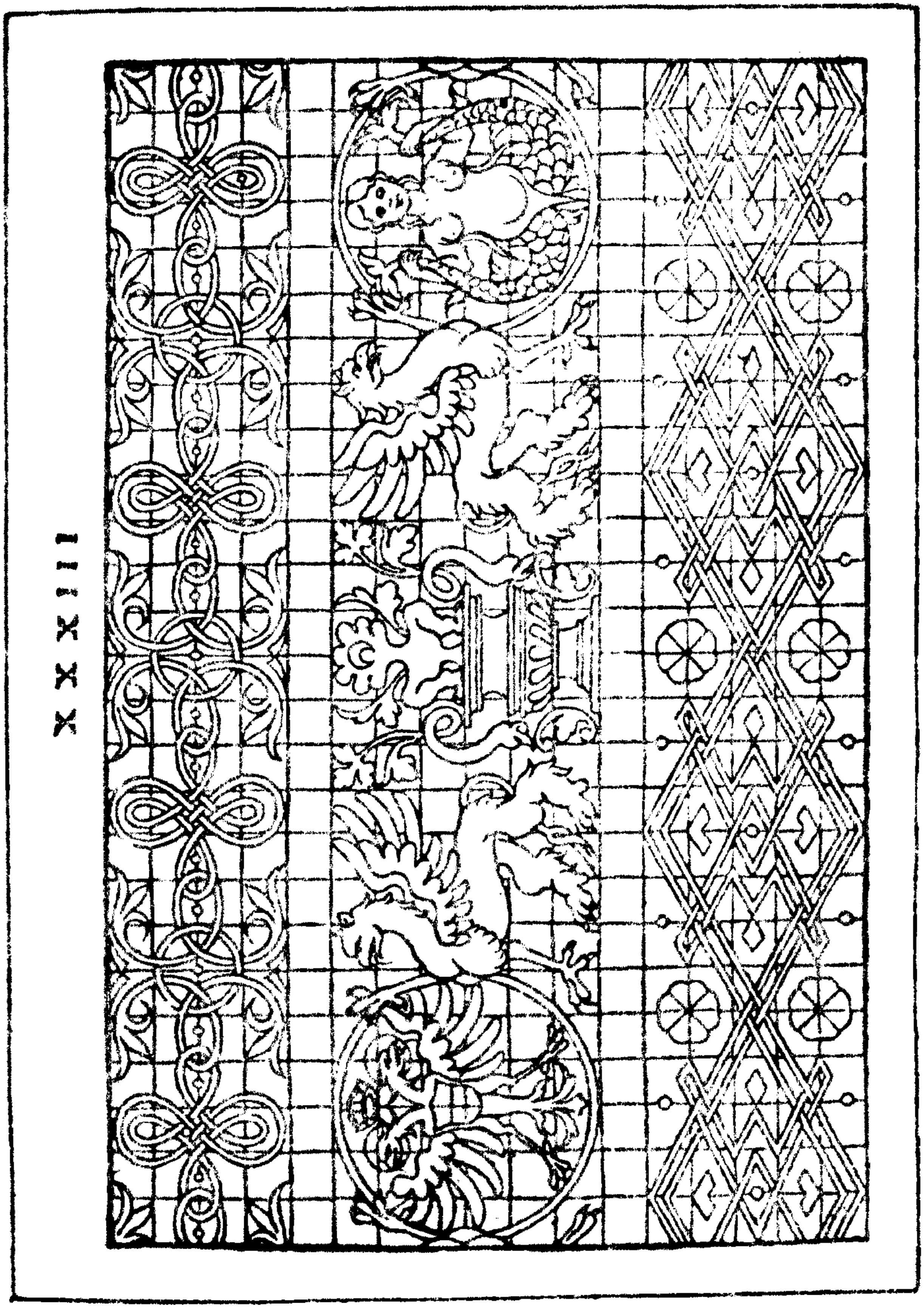

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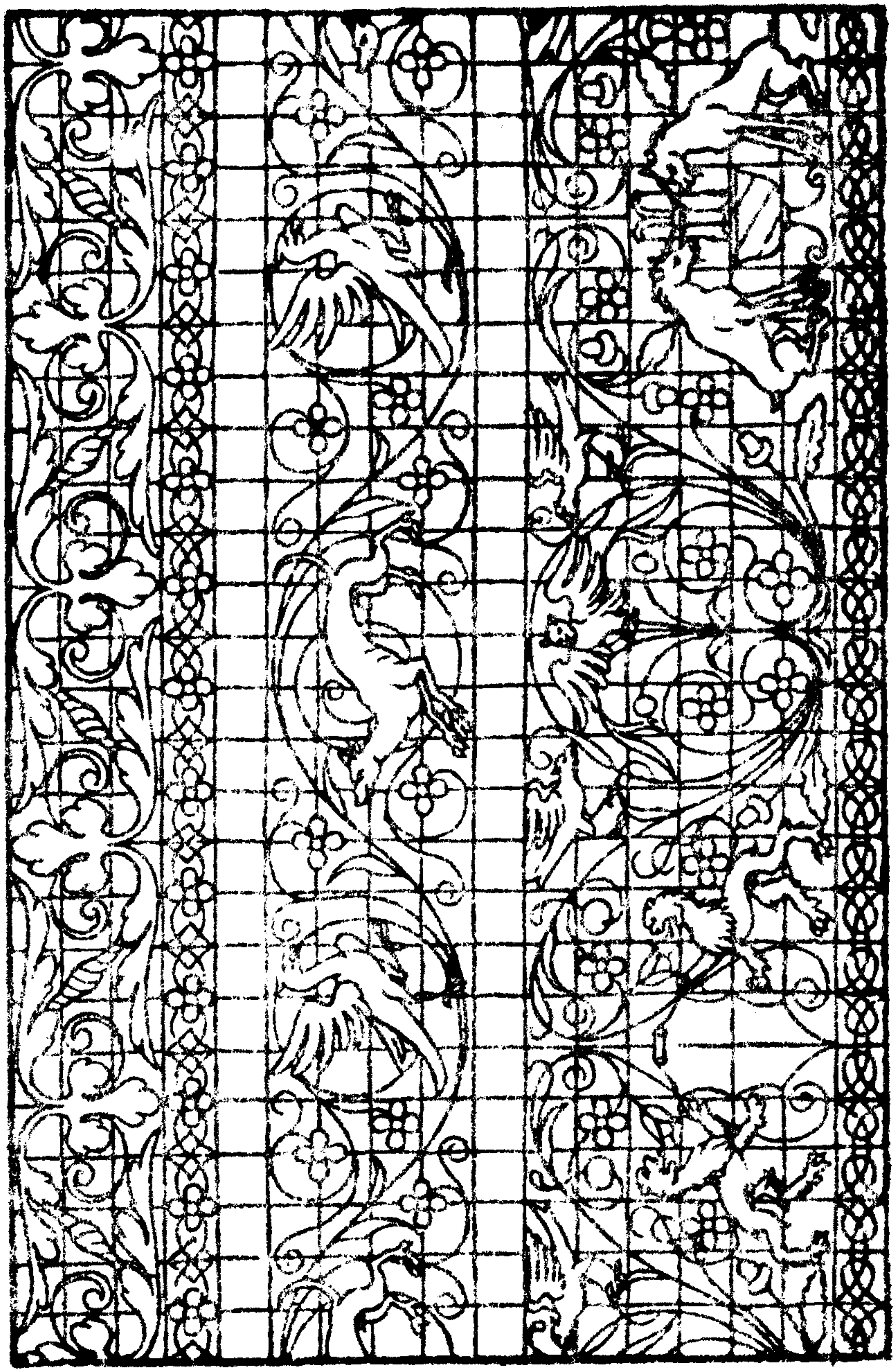



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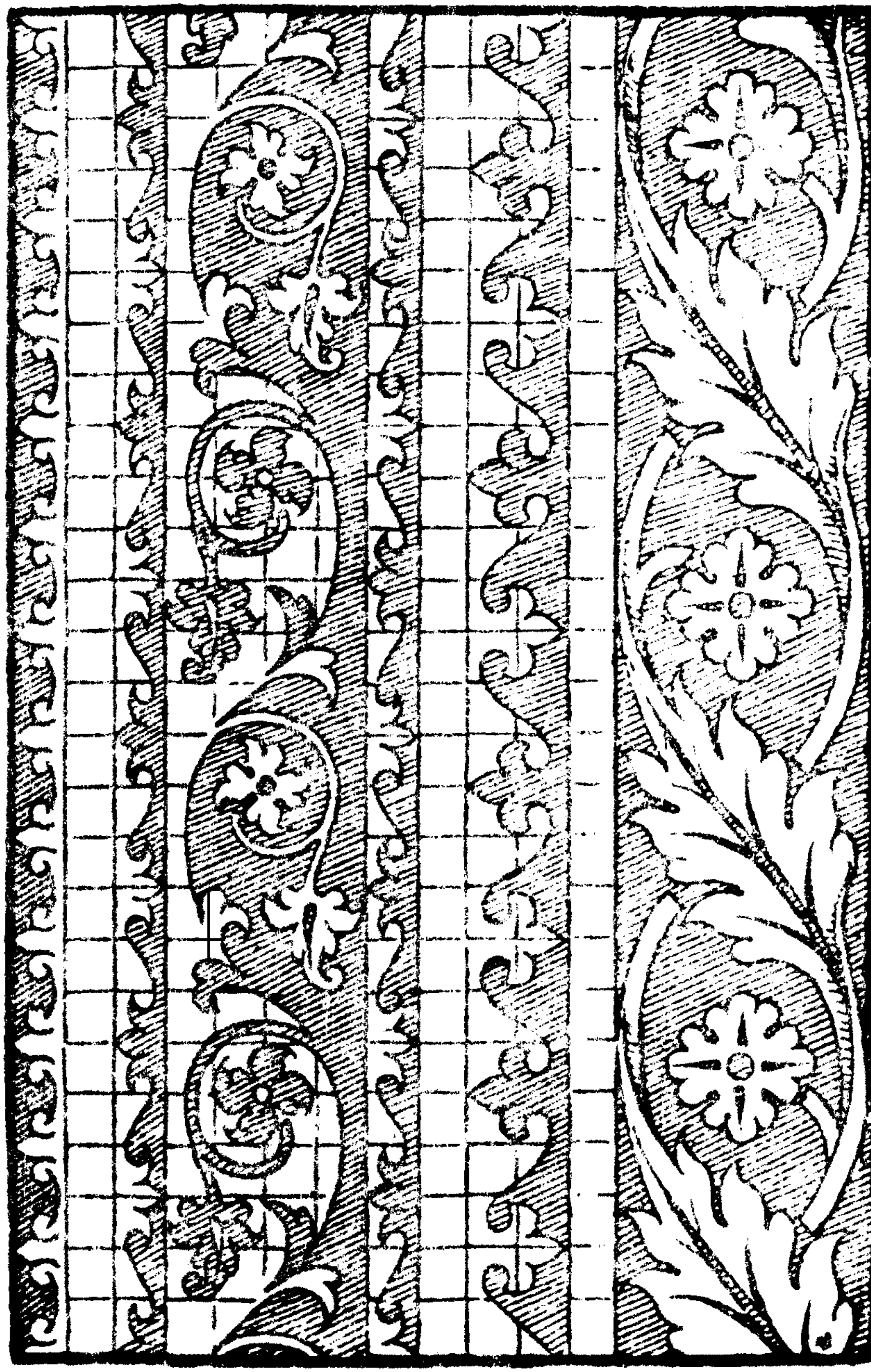

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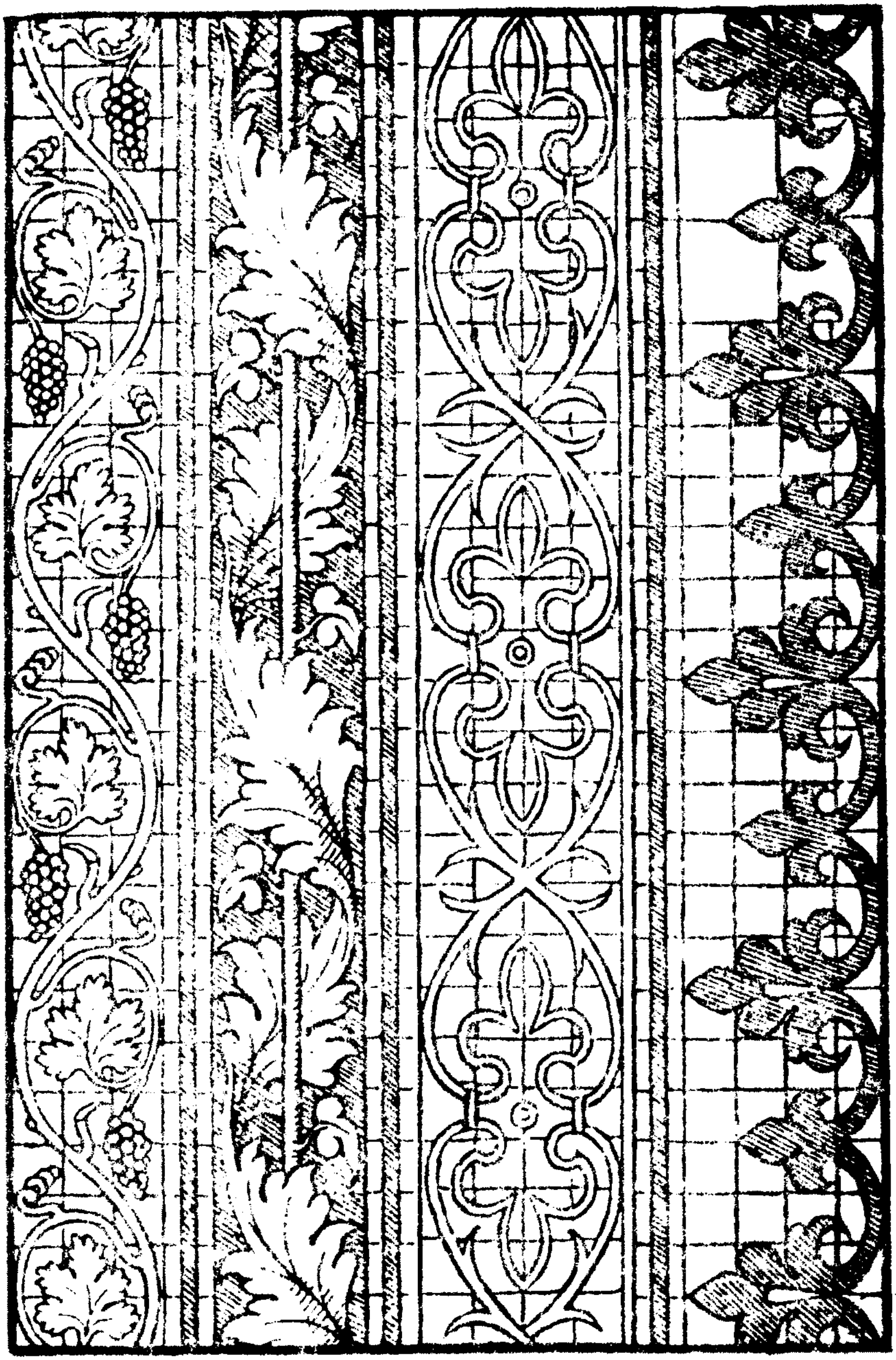
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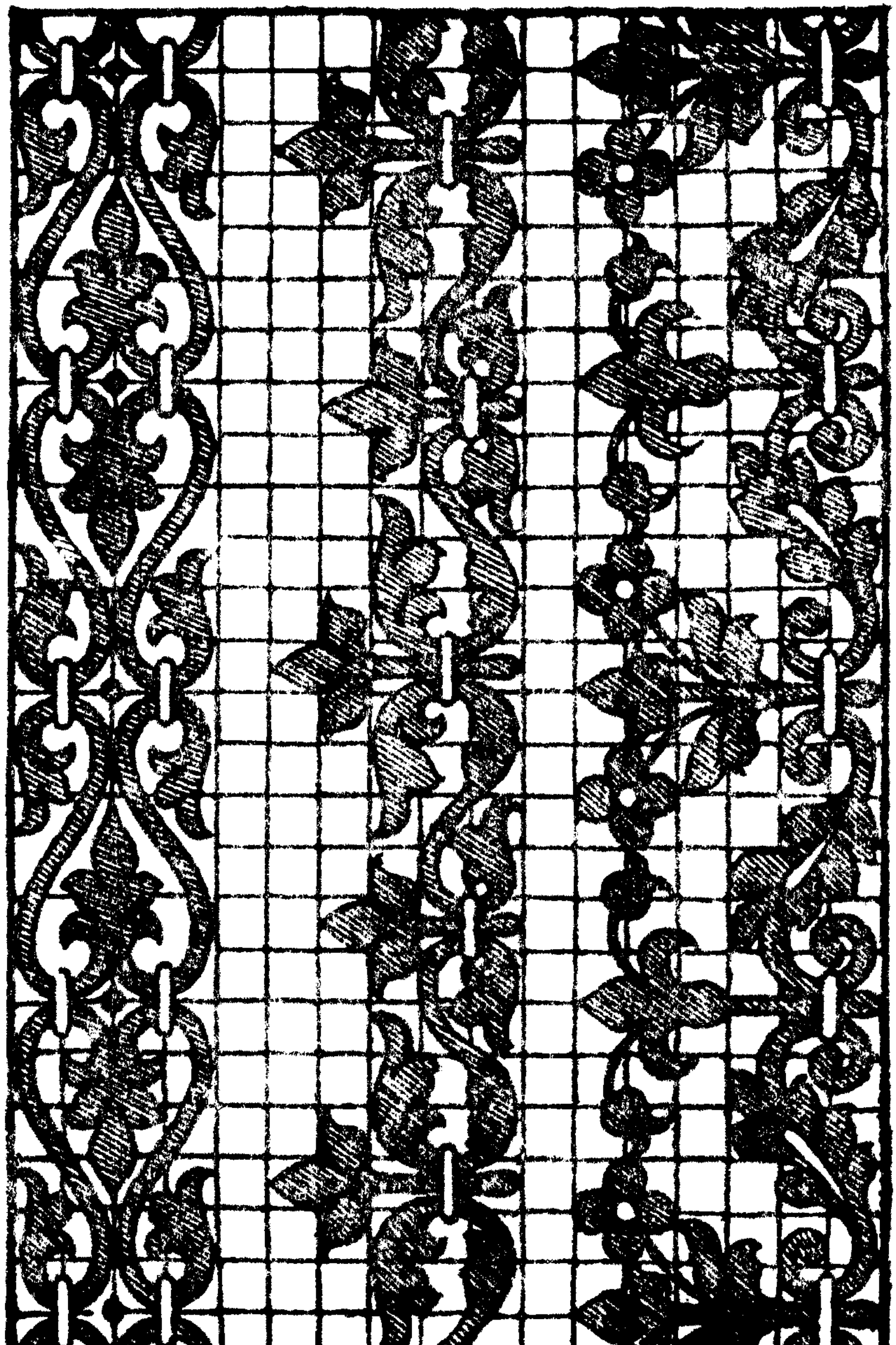
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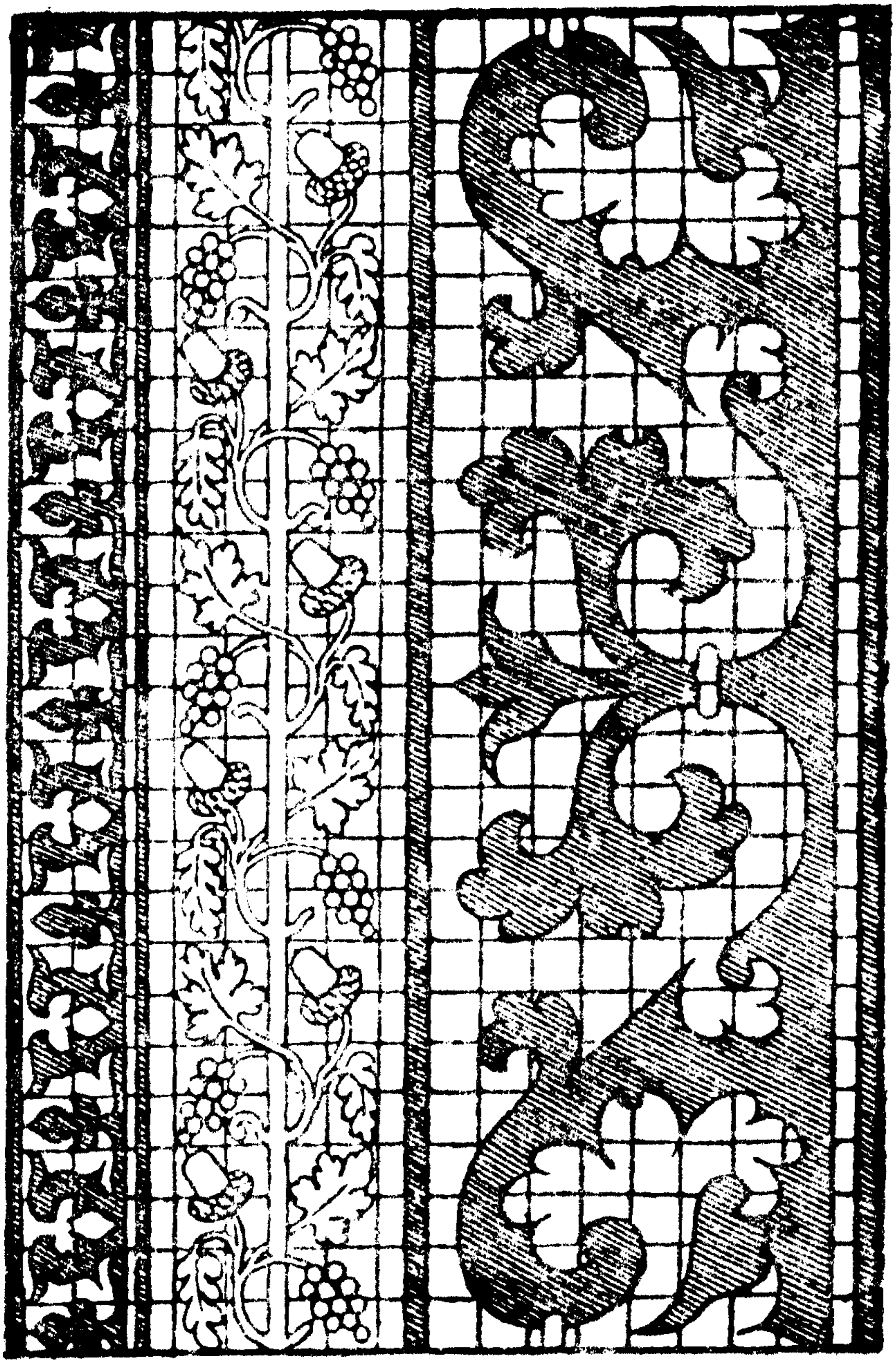
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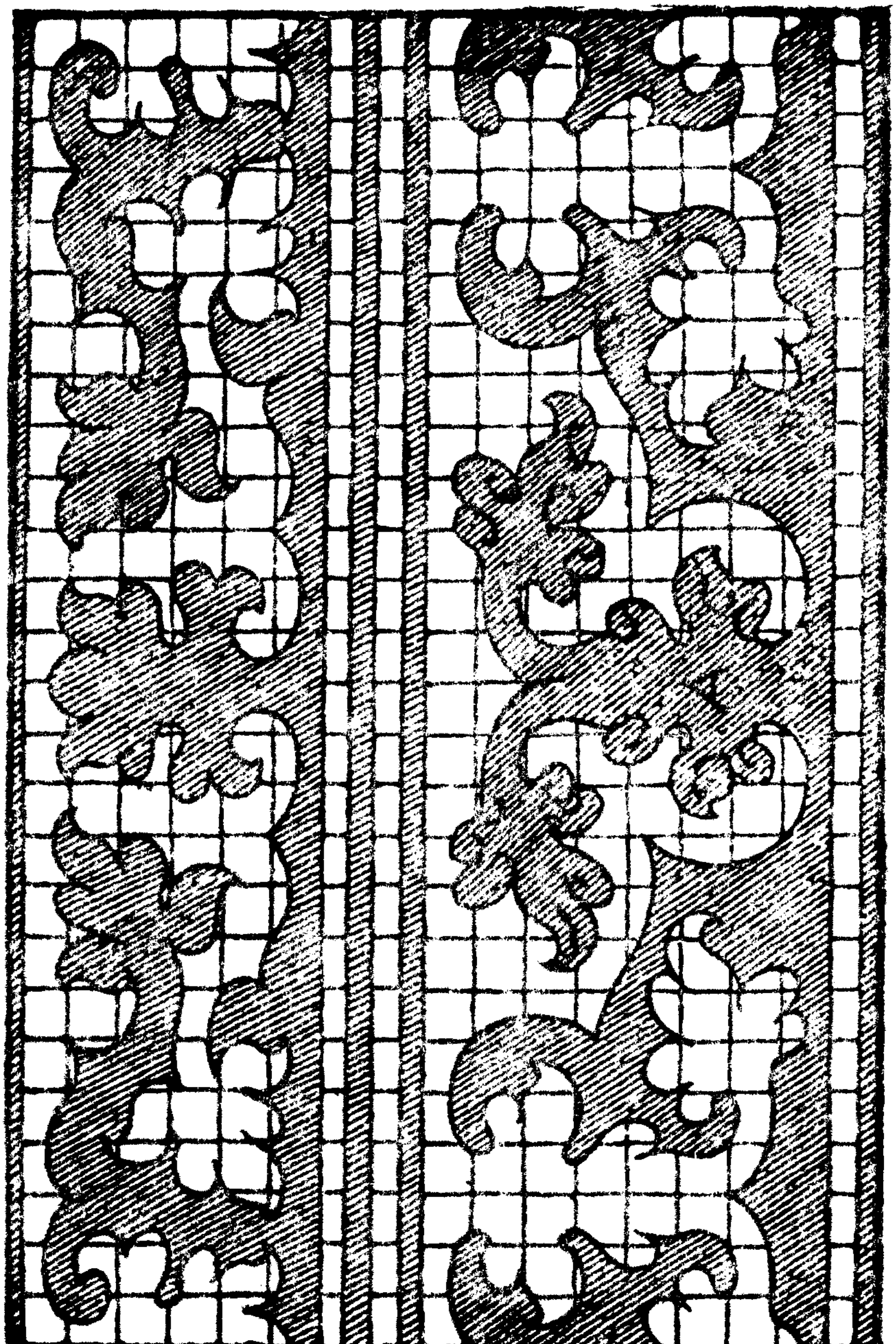
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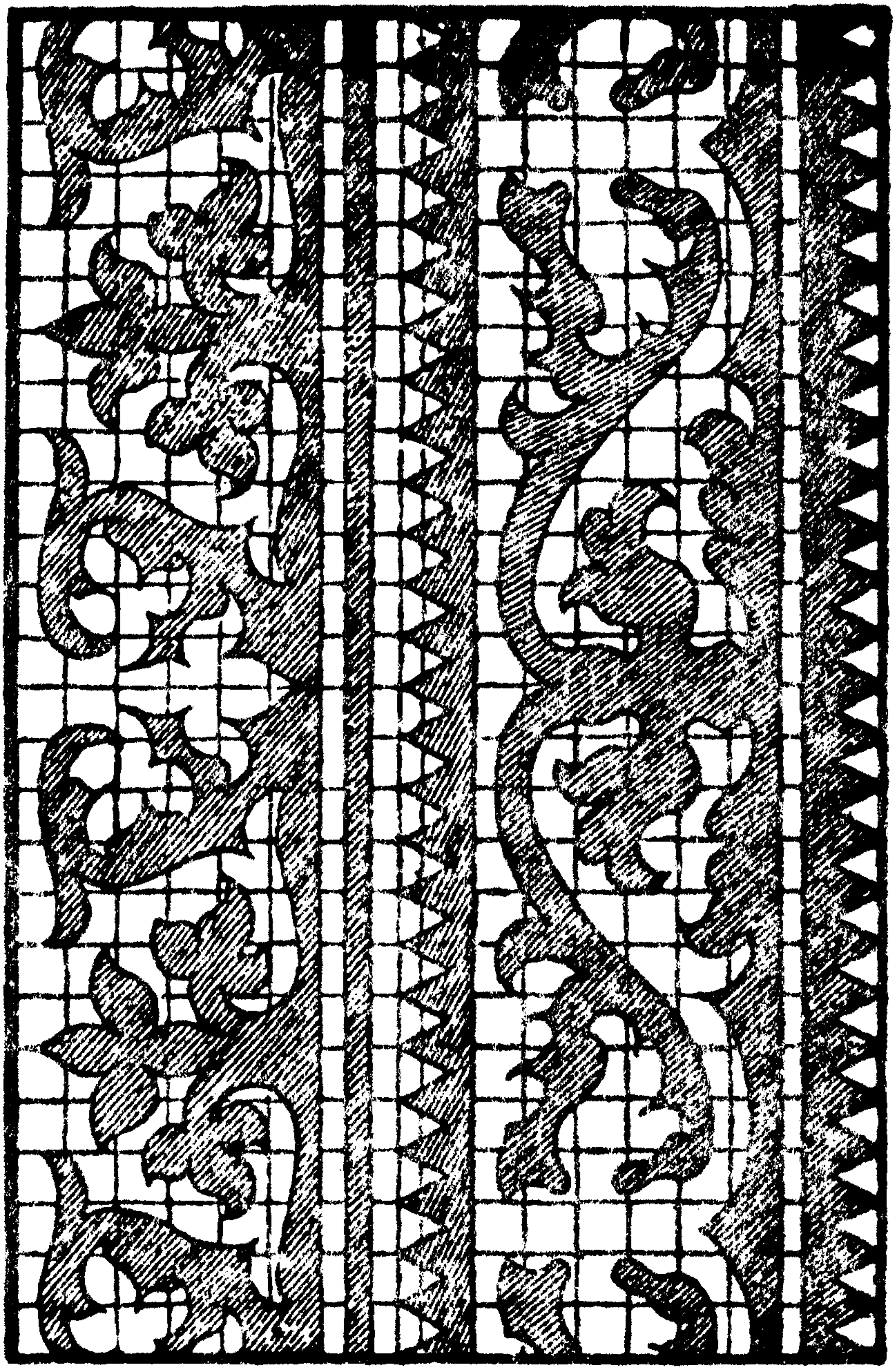


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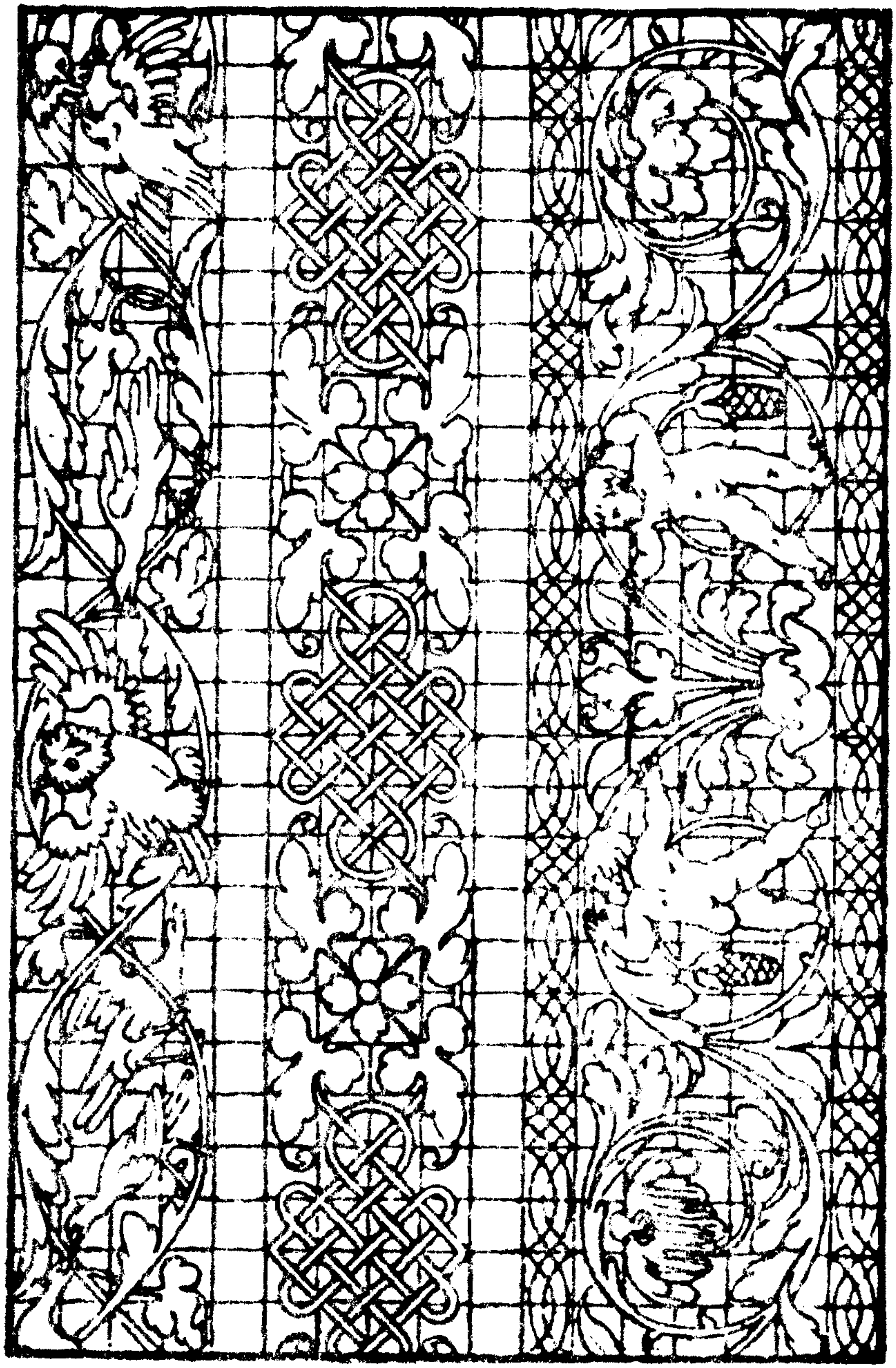


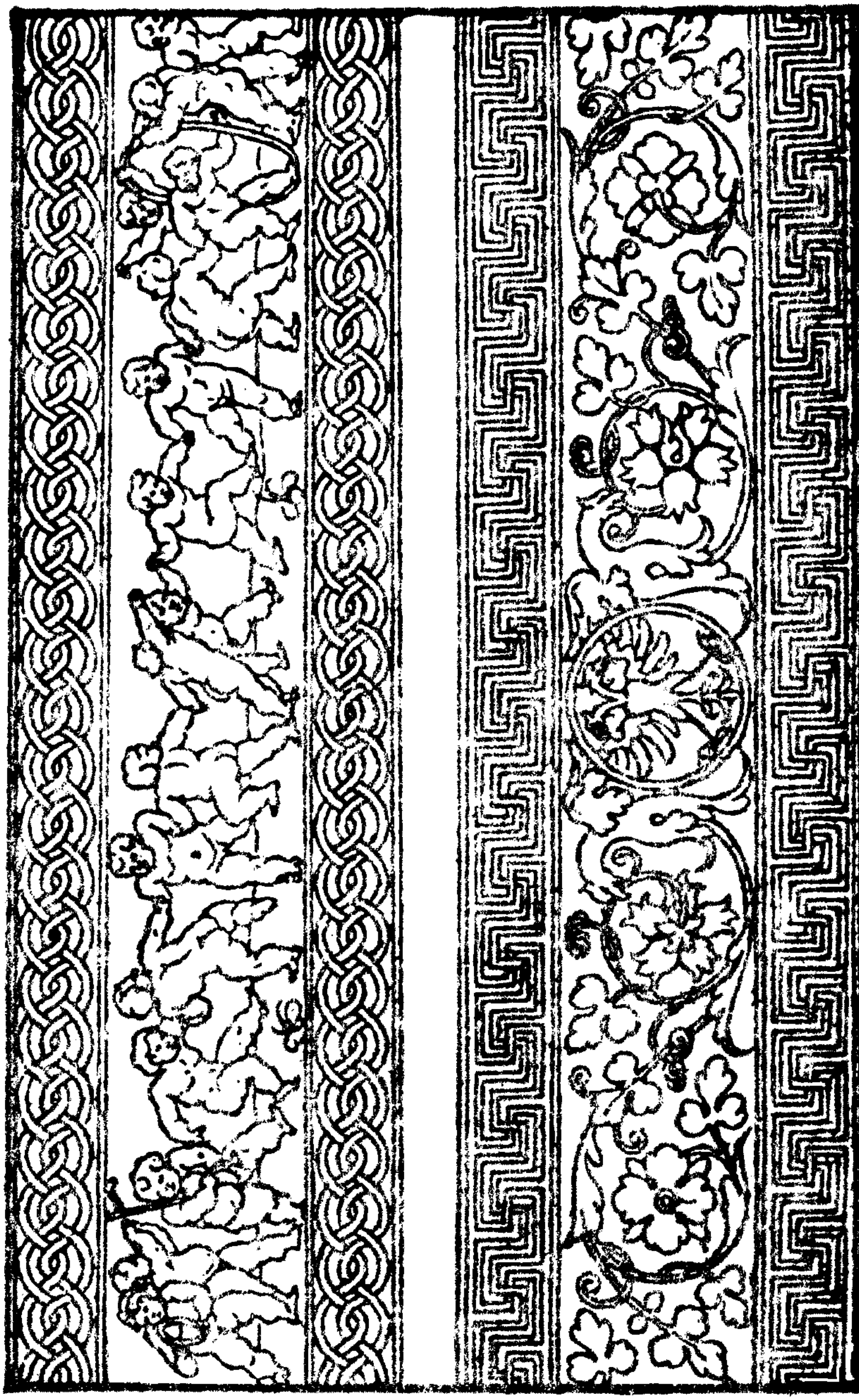
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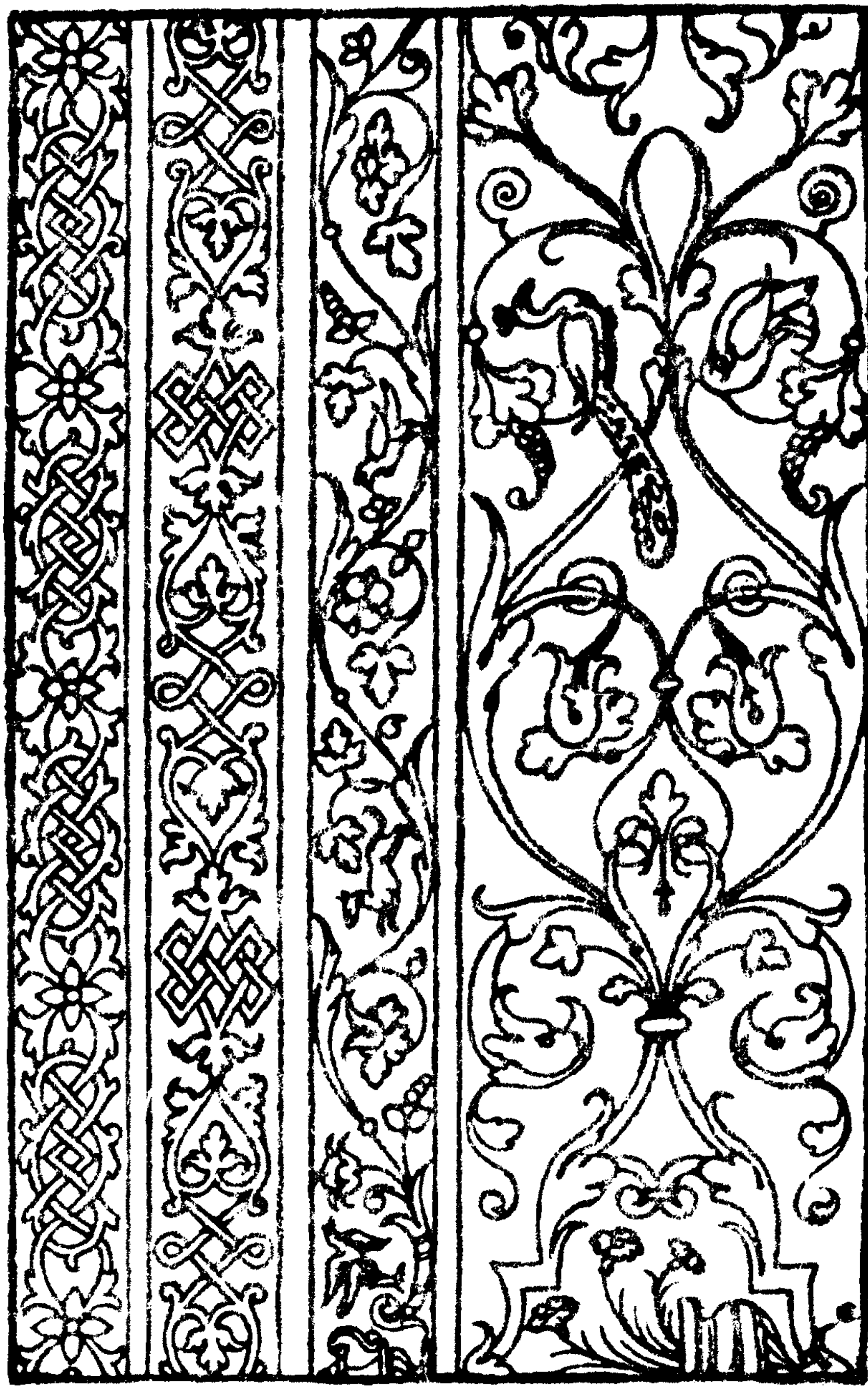


XLII

XLIIII



XLIV



XLV



GIOVENIV.

EFFETTI uarij dan le età diuerse
Giuoca'l fanciul, sta lieto suona e canta
Il giouan, chi in amor le uoglie ha perse.

XLVI



PARIS.

LARGHE ricchezze, alto dominio poco
Vaglion nel cor' humano, e men uirtute
Doue s'addopra amor, ritroua luoco.


XLVIII
PIRAMO E TISBE.
CHE non puo amor, se puo far ch'aspra sorte
Elegga chi d'amor morendo uiue;
E corra al fer per duol dell'altrui morte.

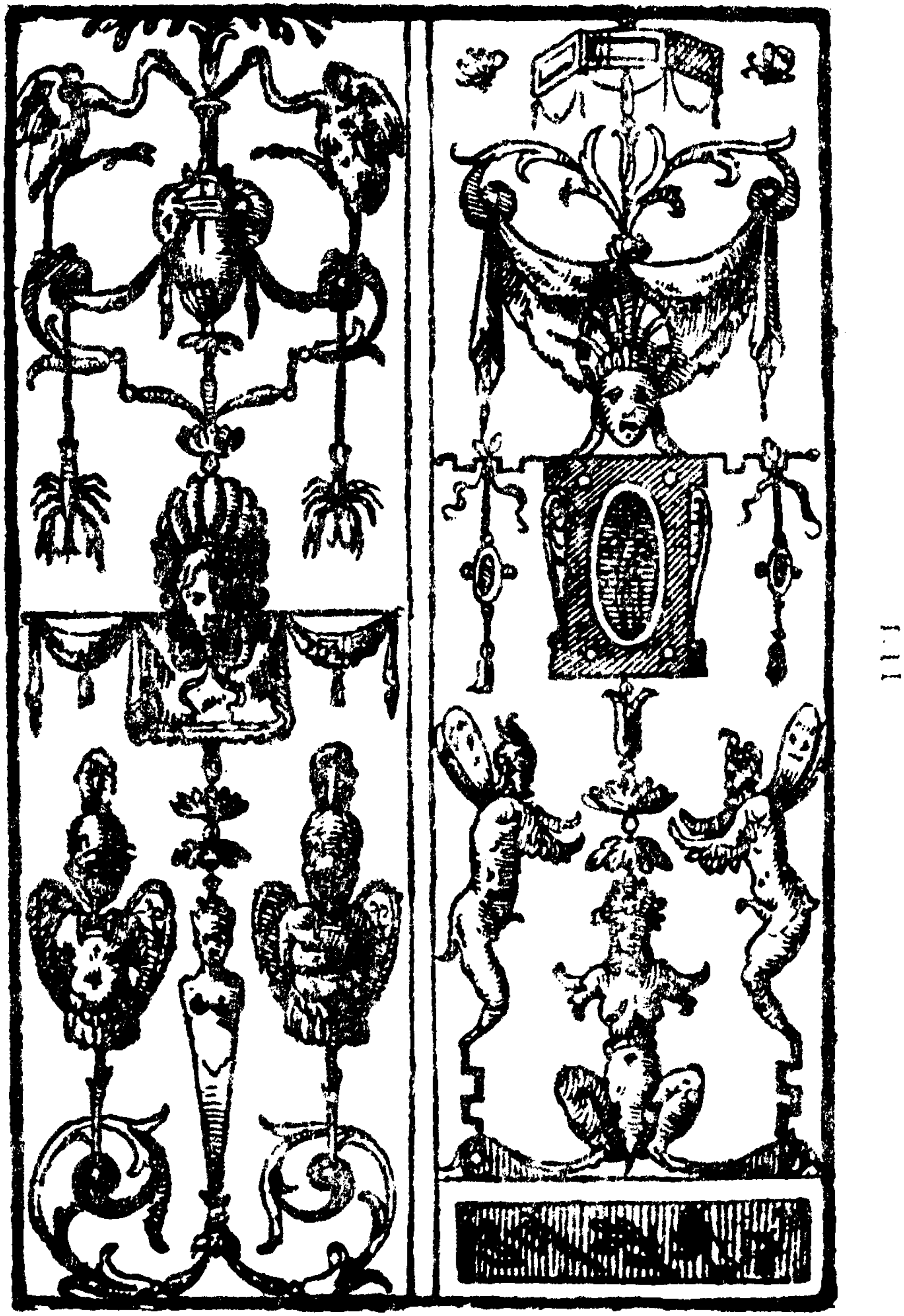

XLVIII
VENERE
BELTA puo tanto, ch'ogni ingegno ogn'arte
A lei si rende, perciò Vener bella
D'amor accese'l cor al fiero Marte.

XLIX

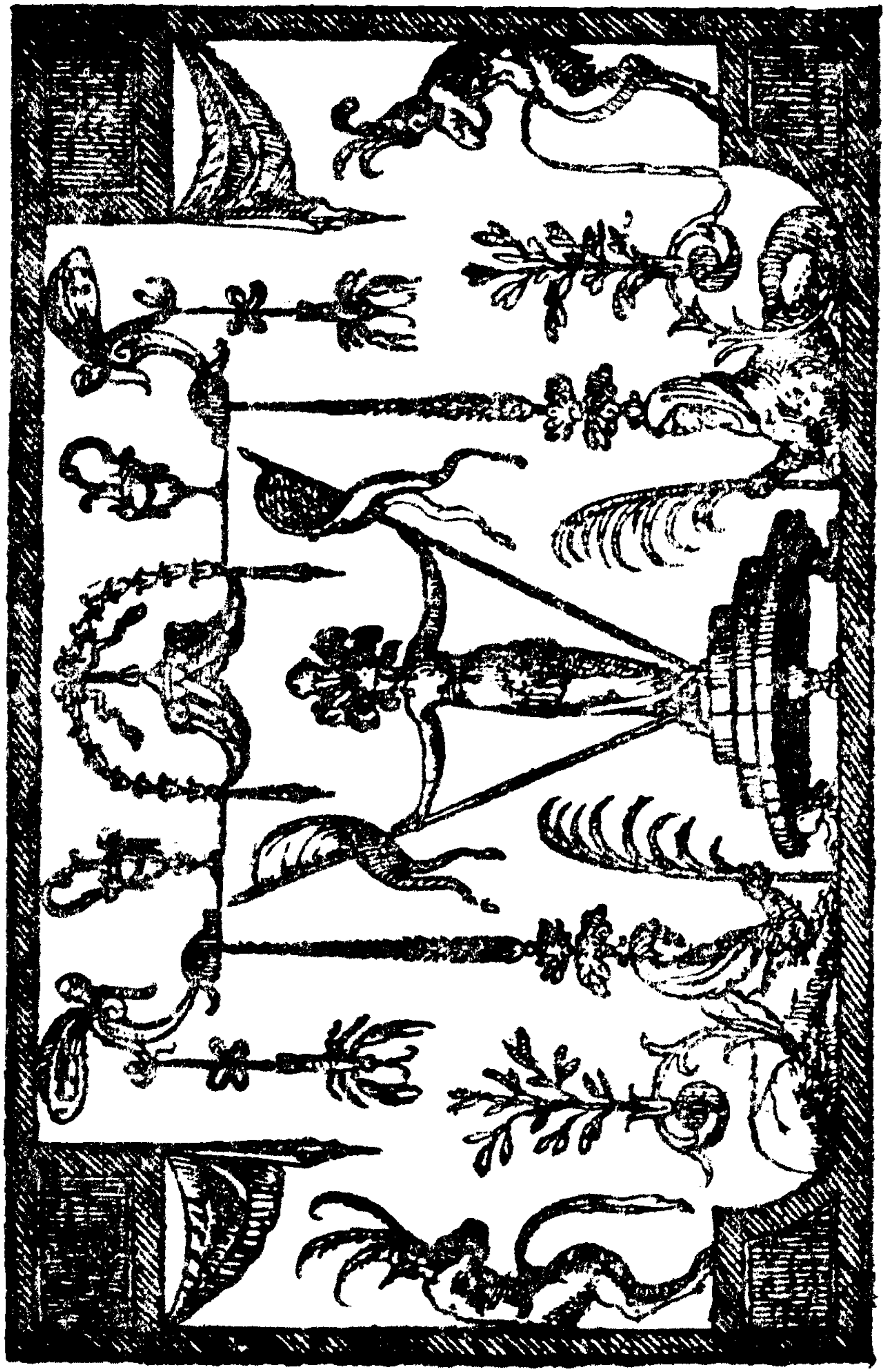






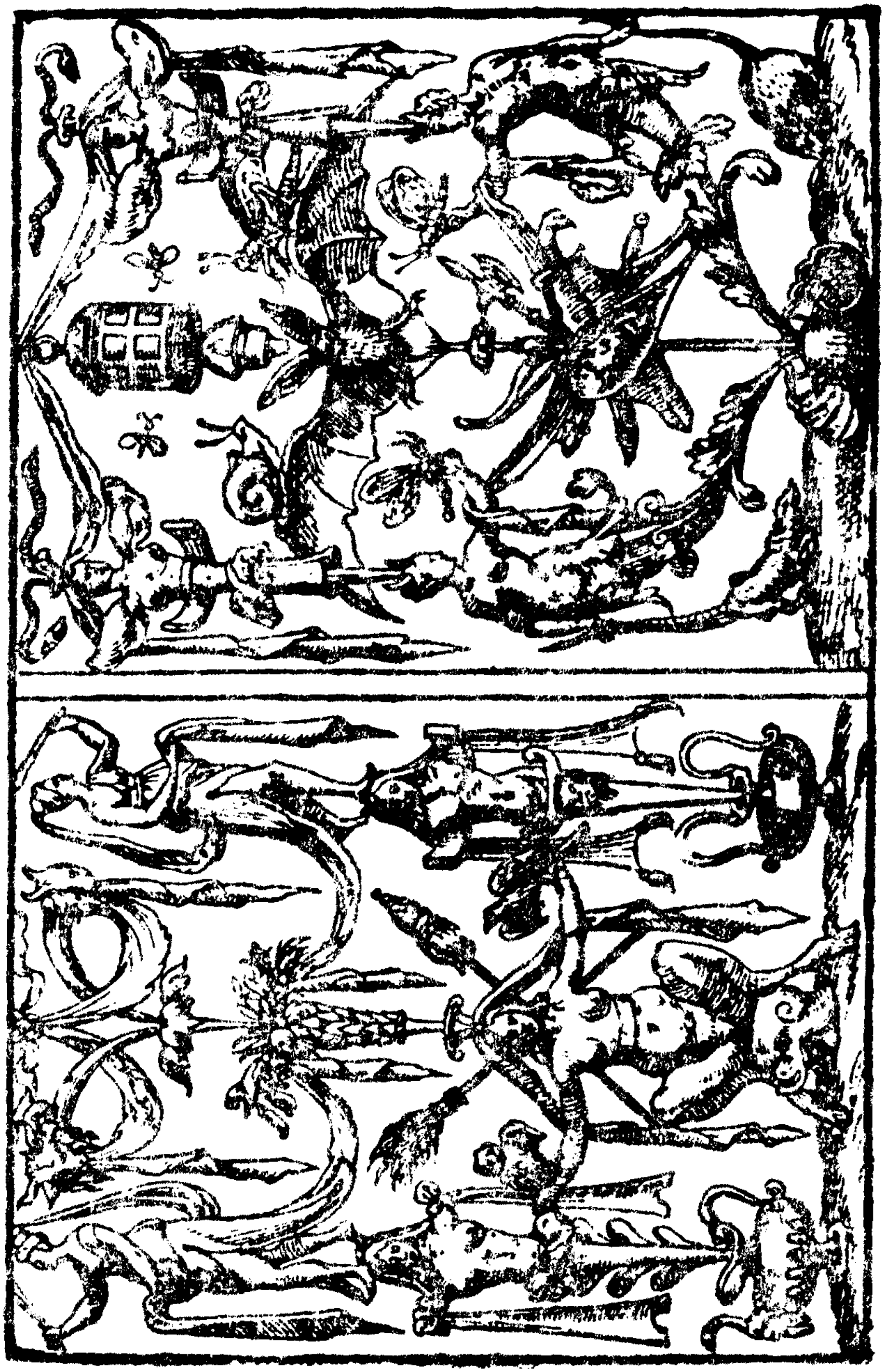


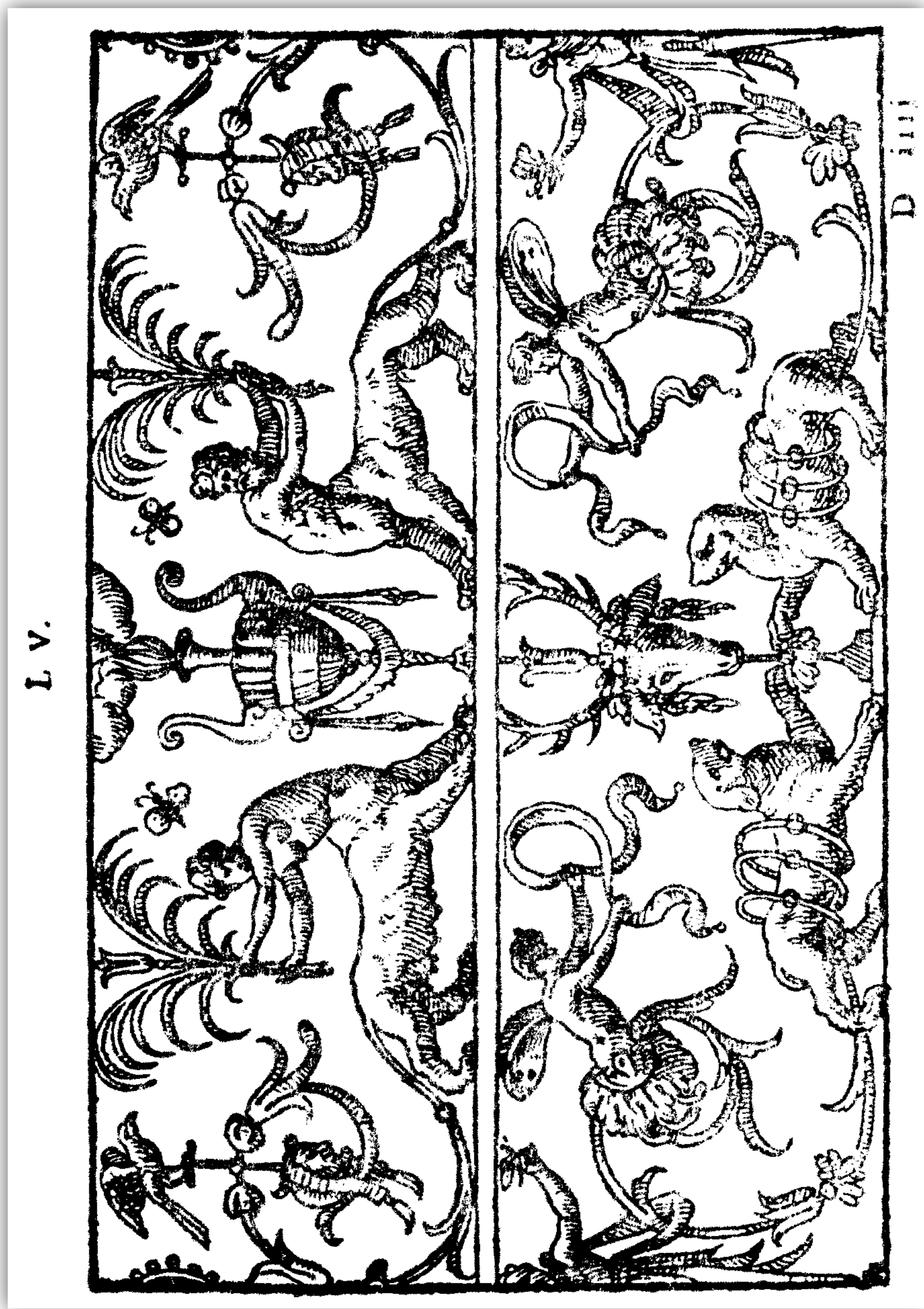
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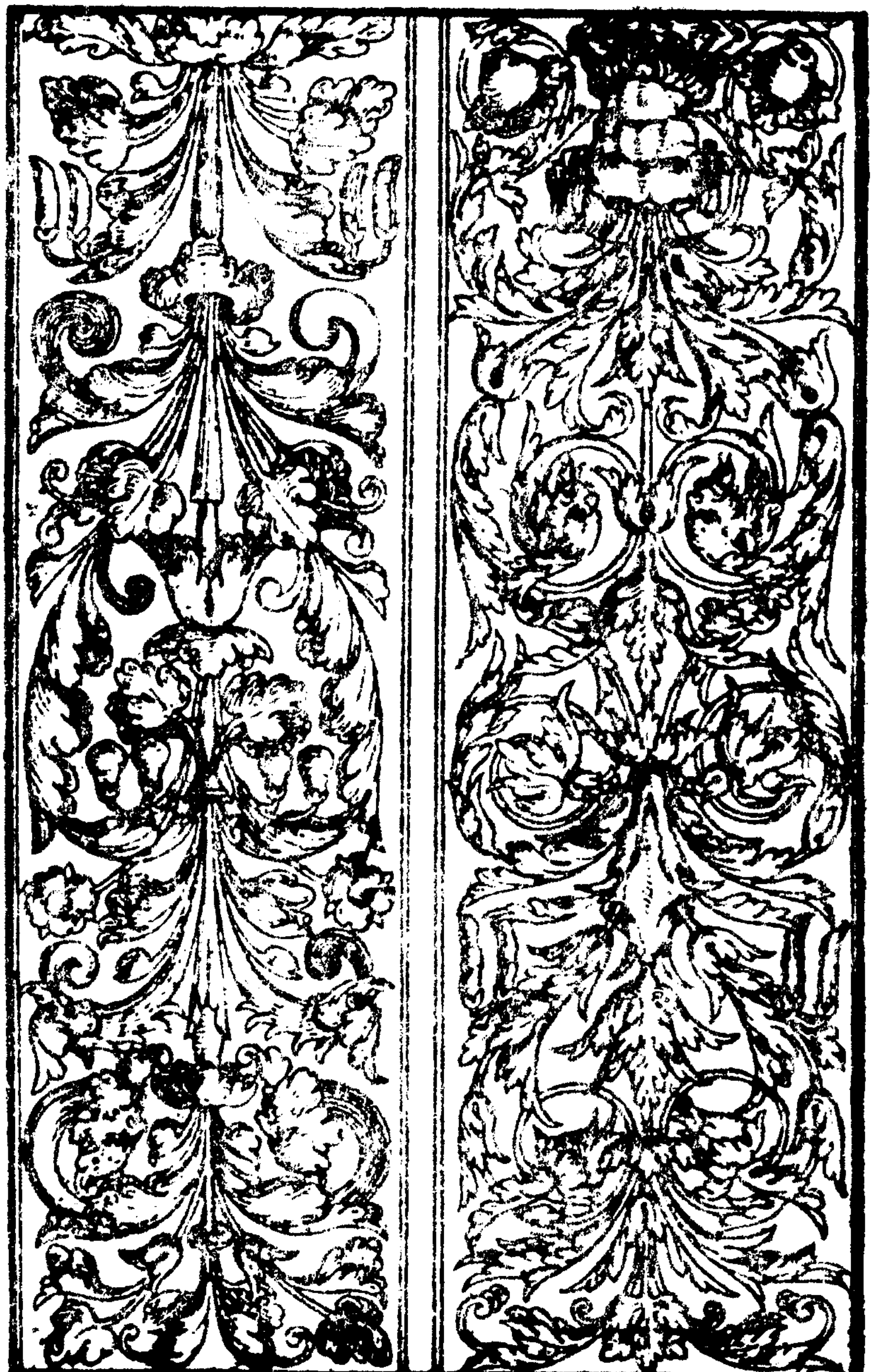




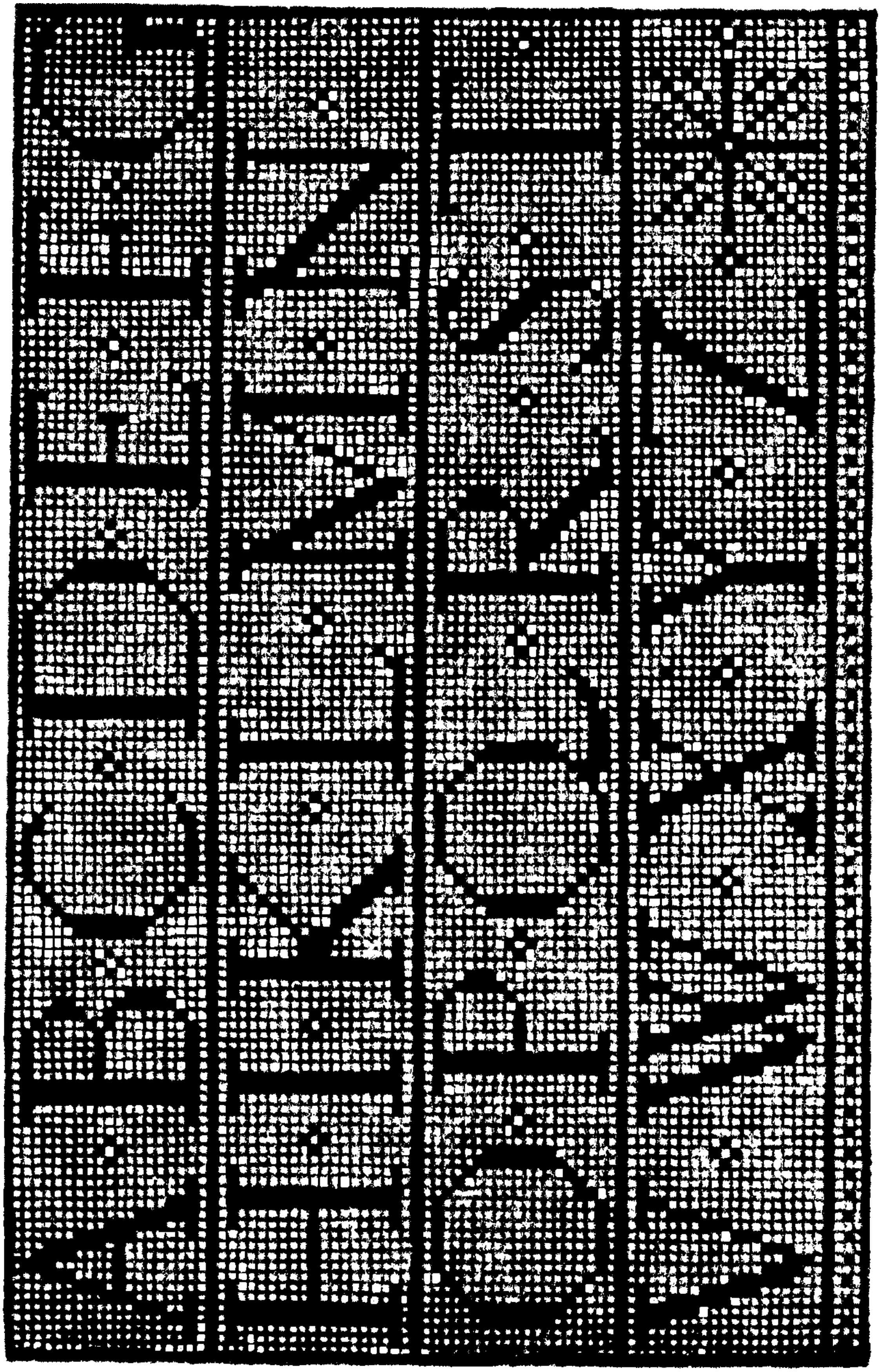
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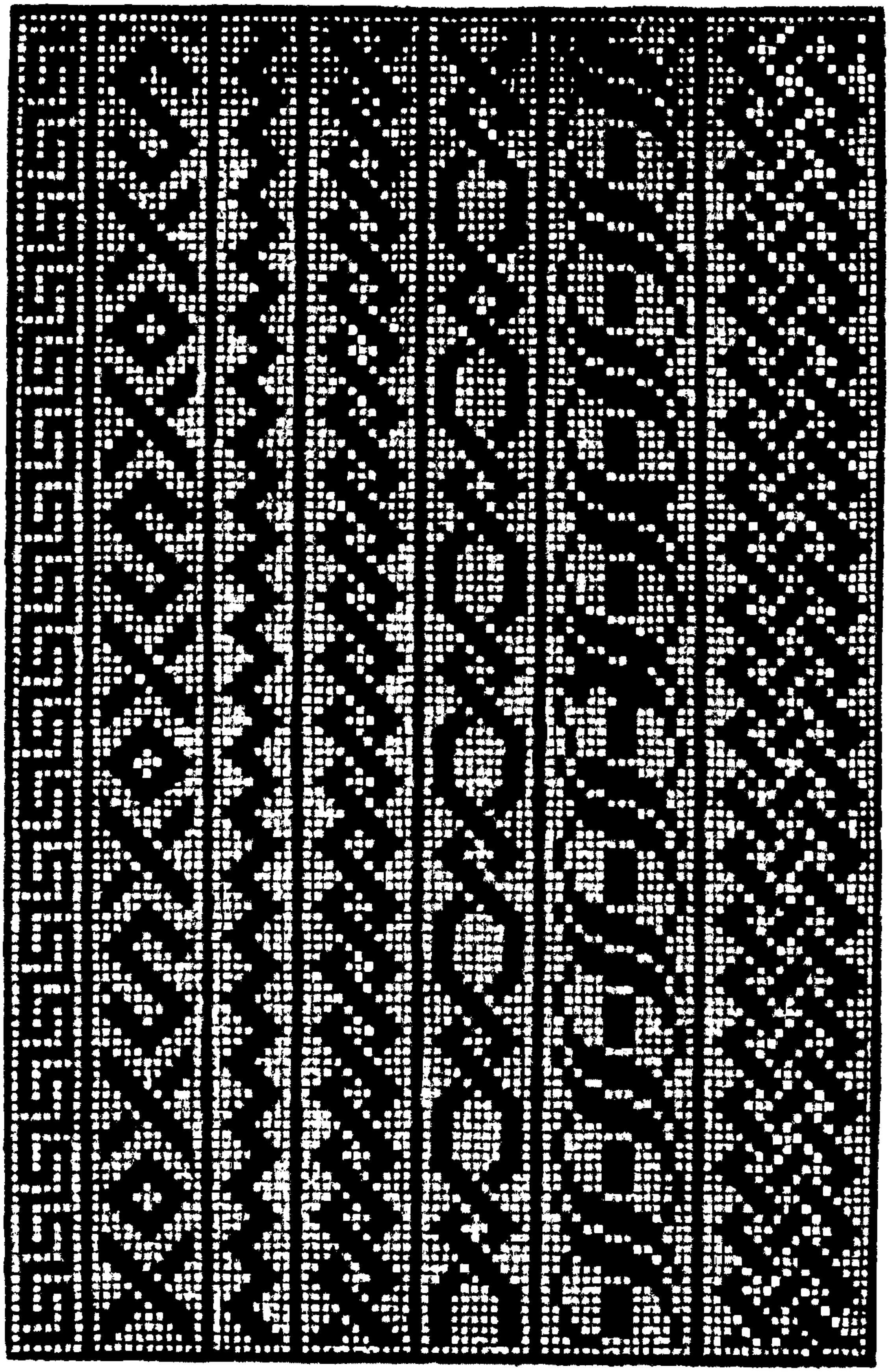
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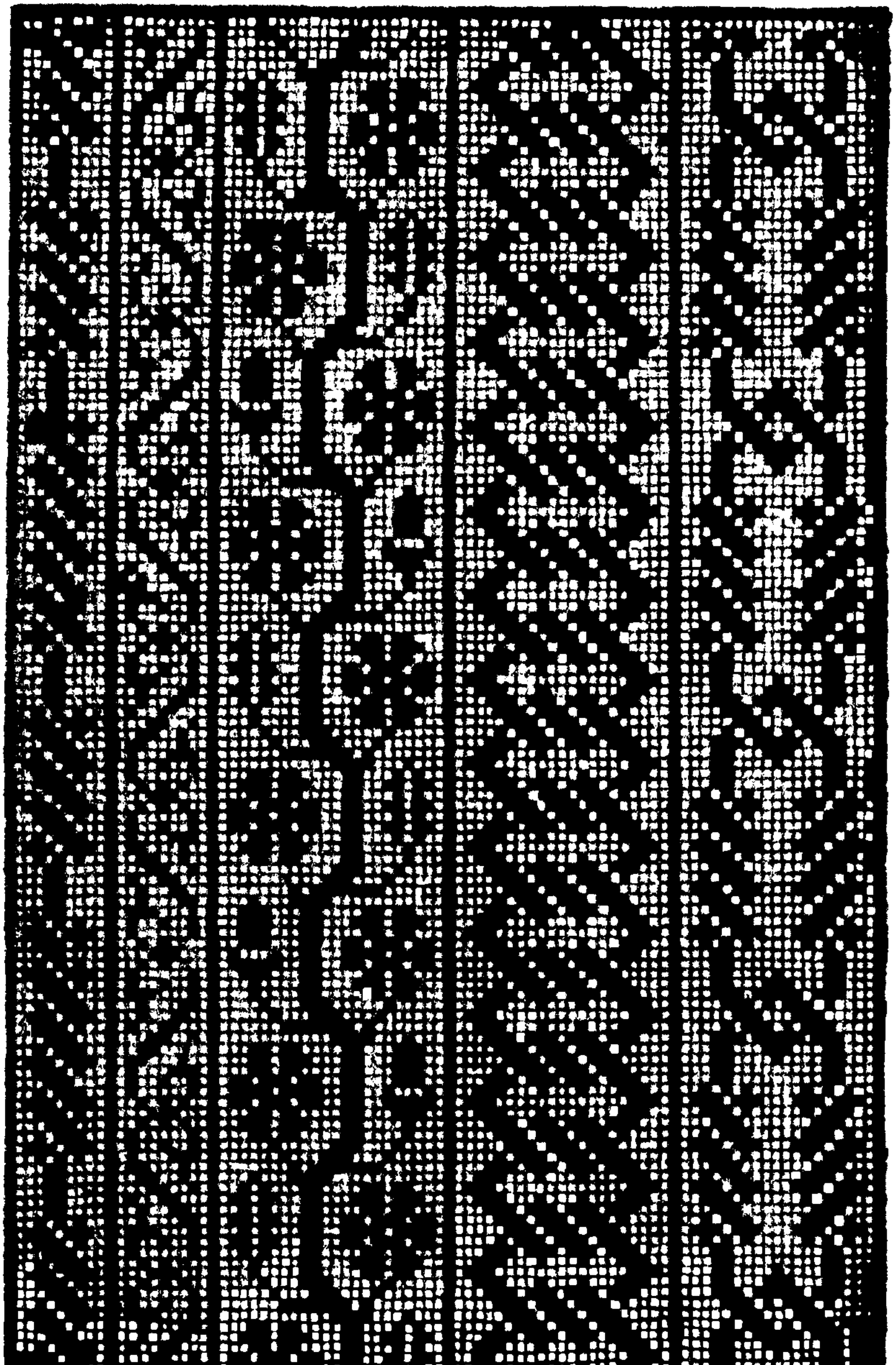
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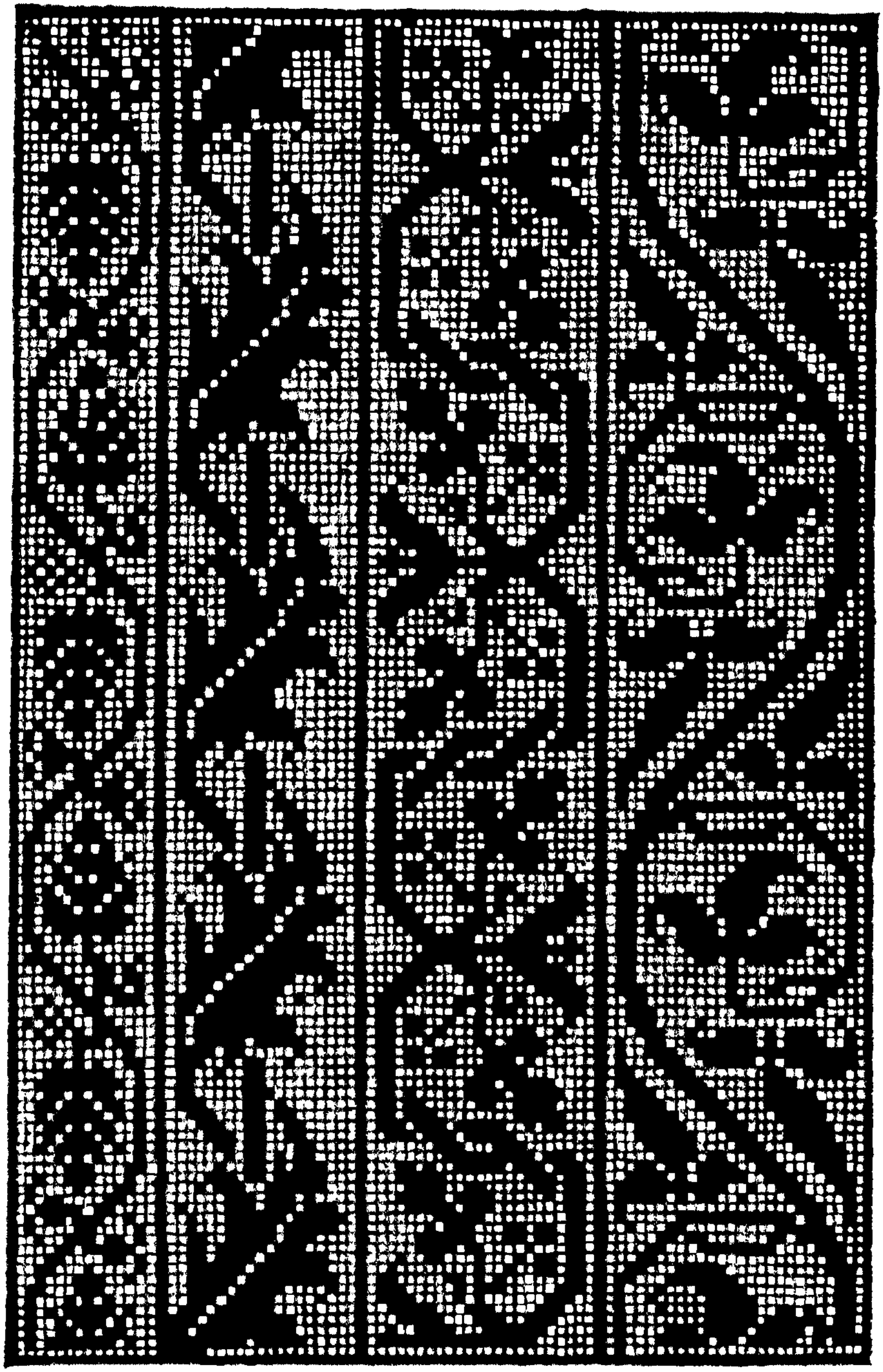
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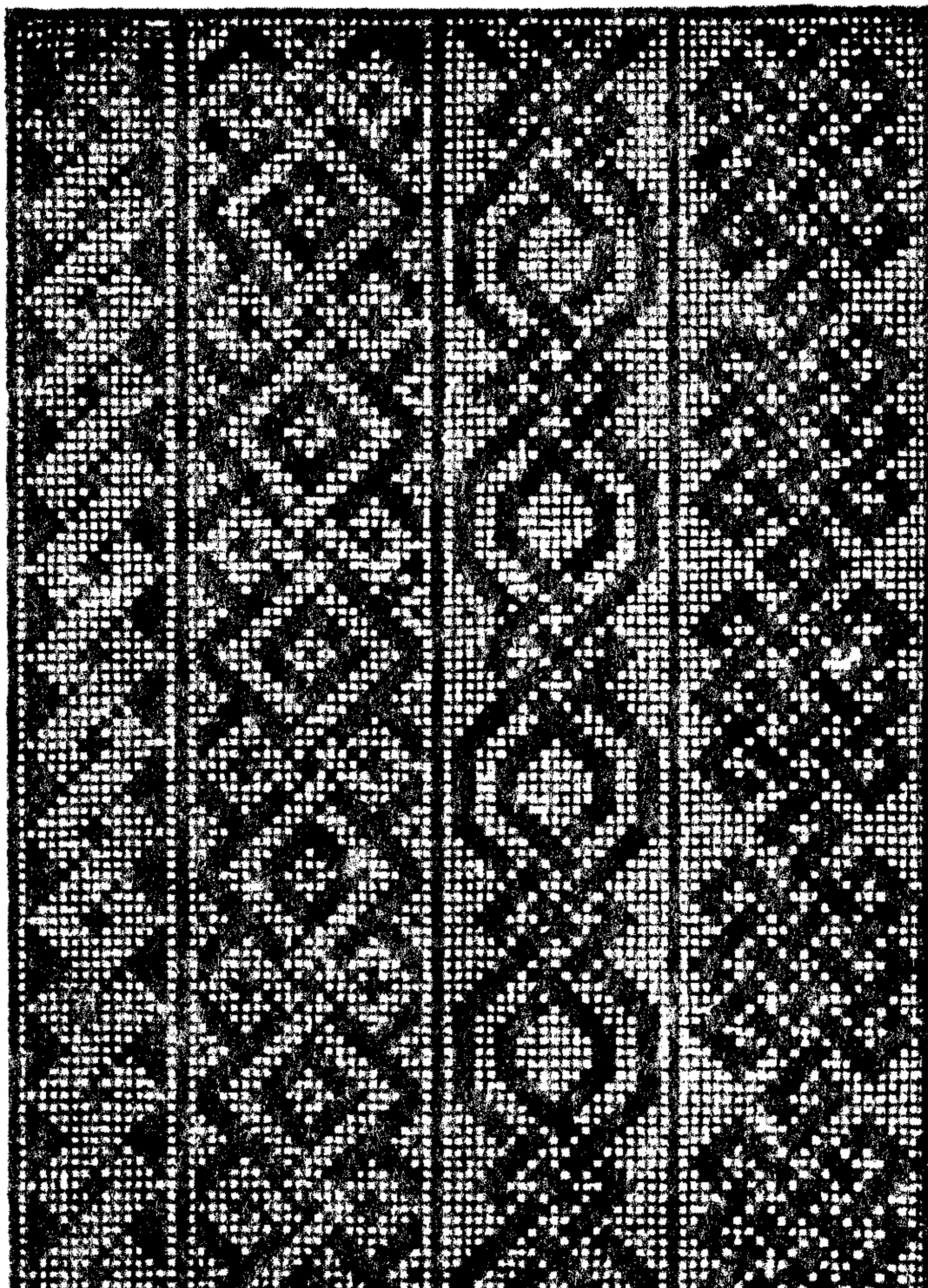
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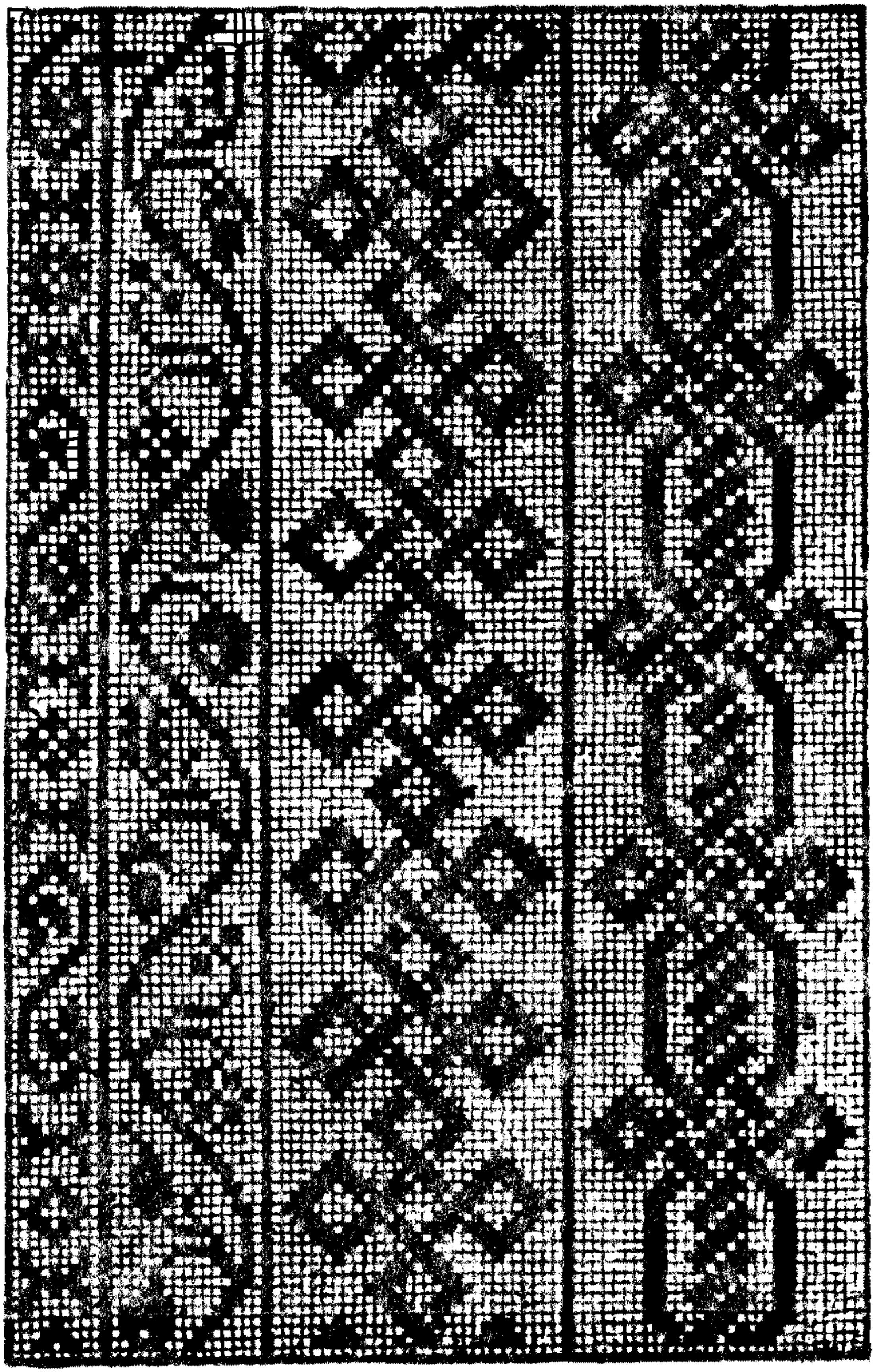
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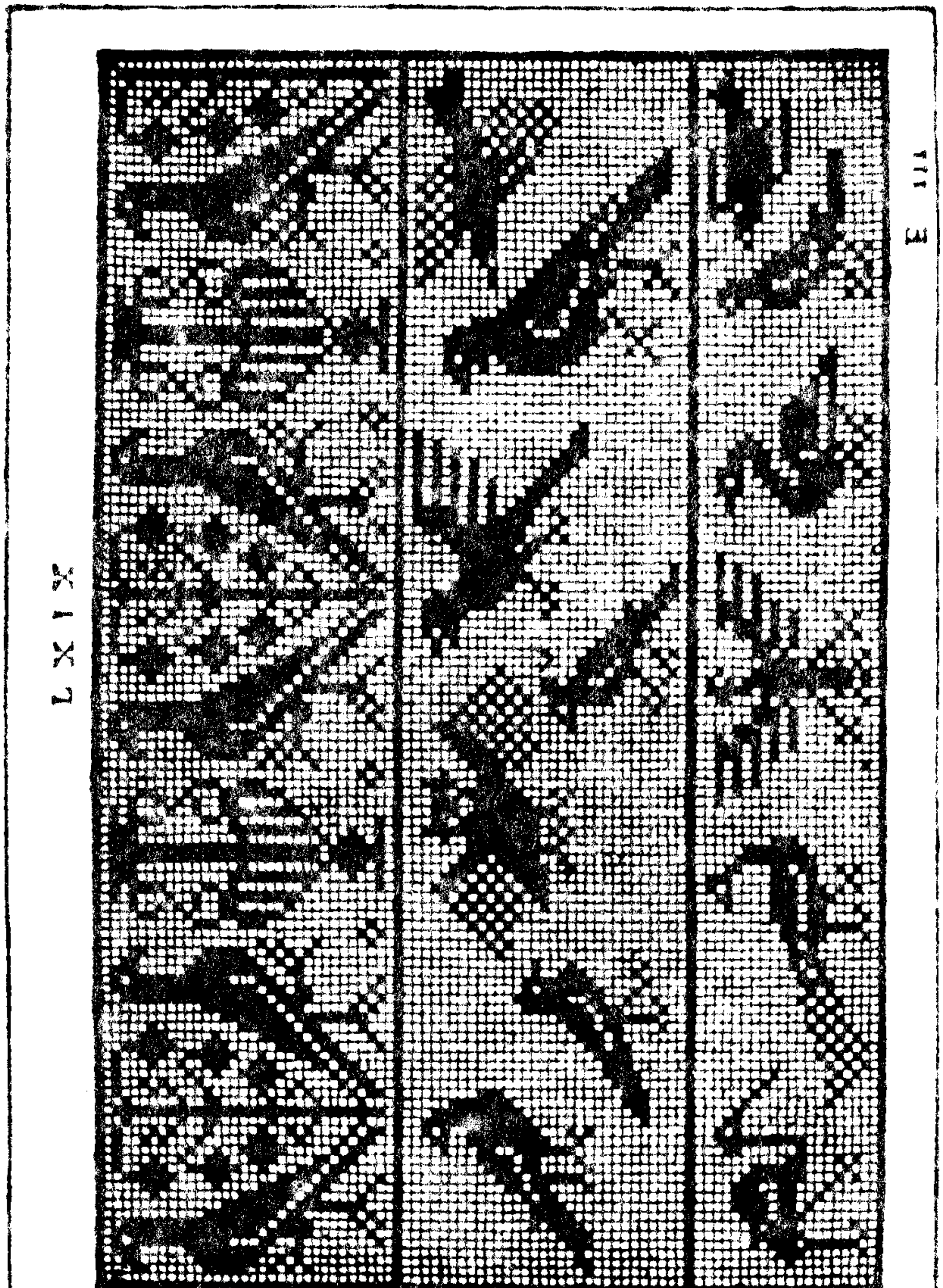


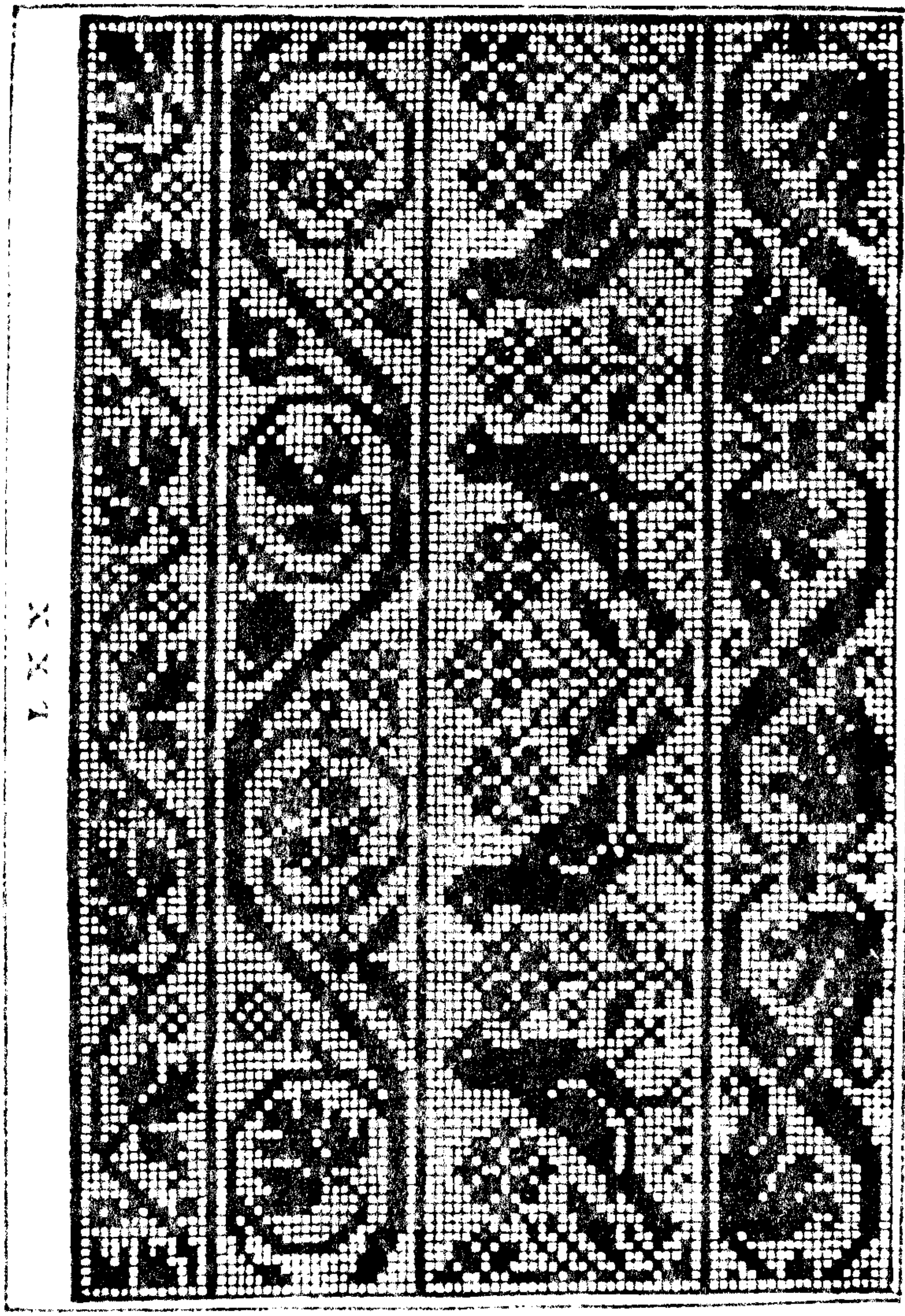
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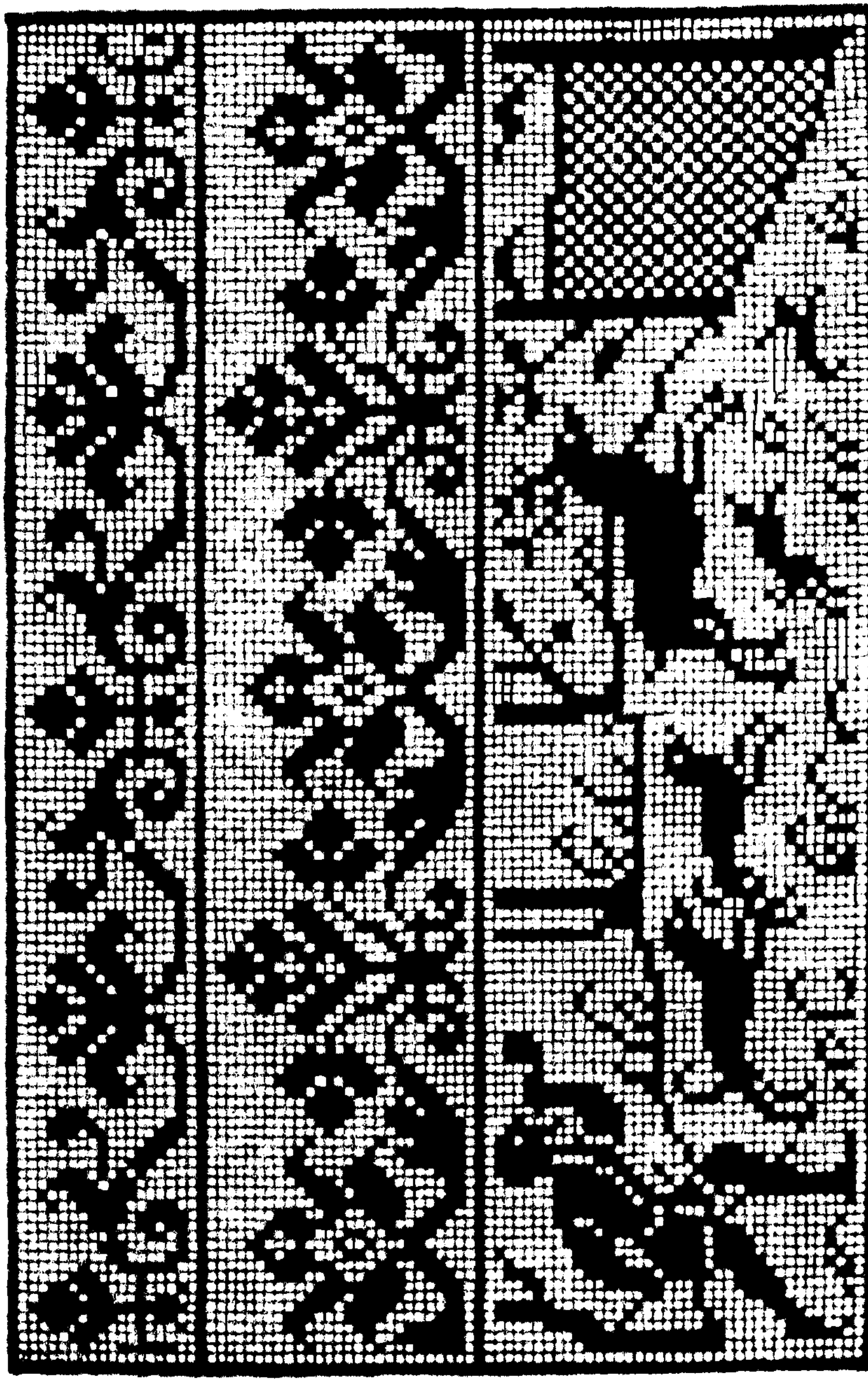


LXVIII

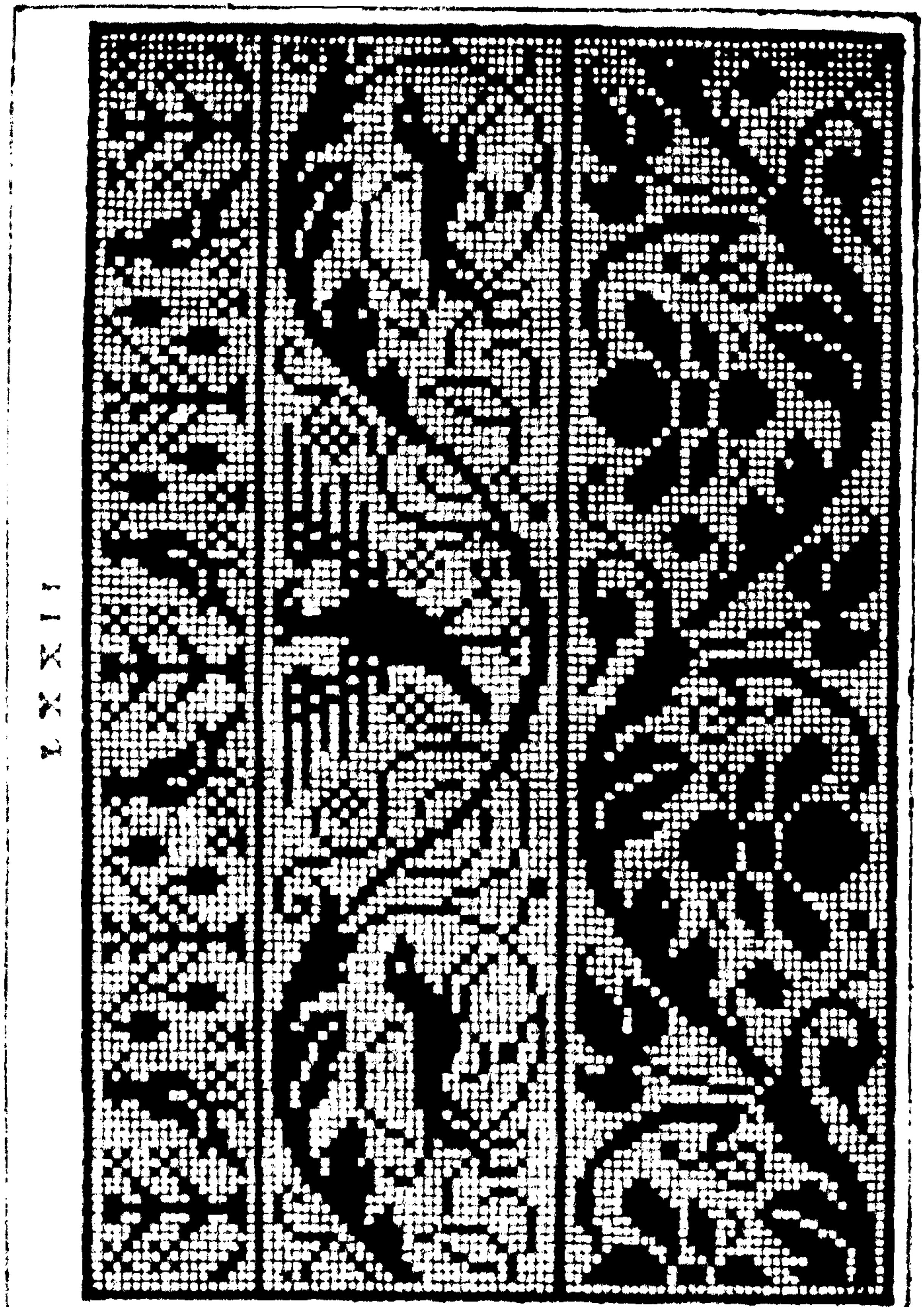


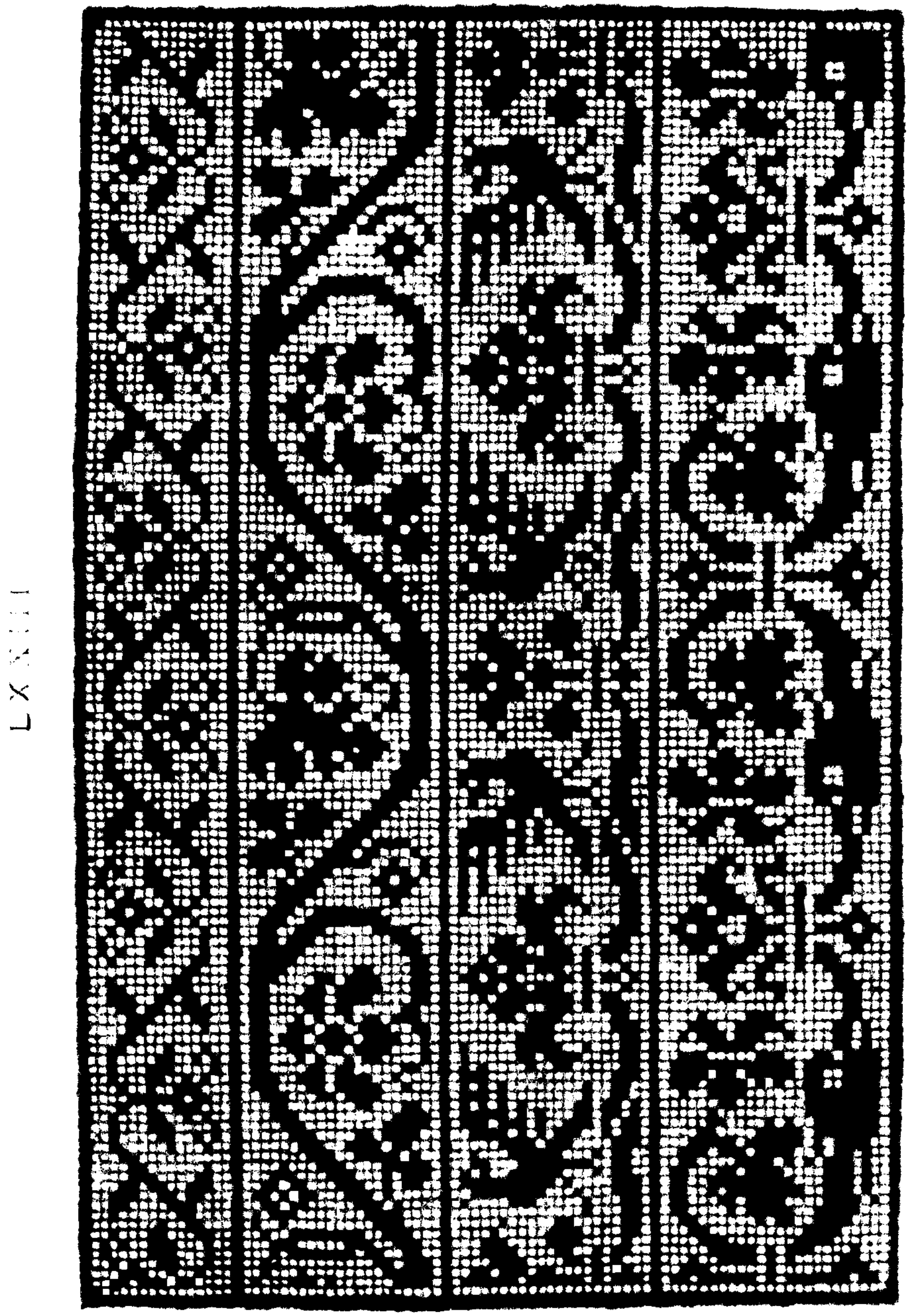

LXIX

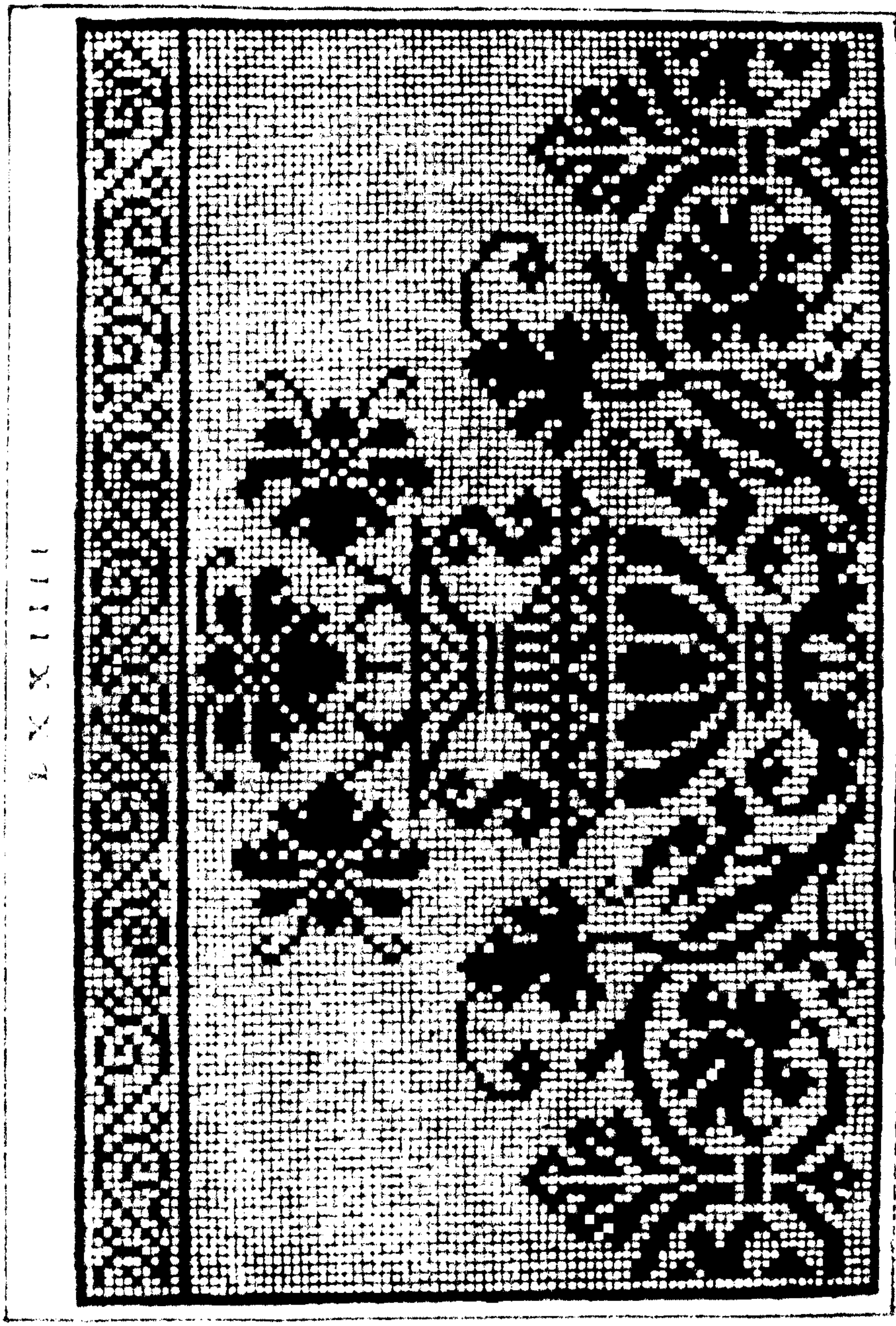


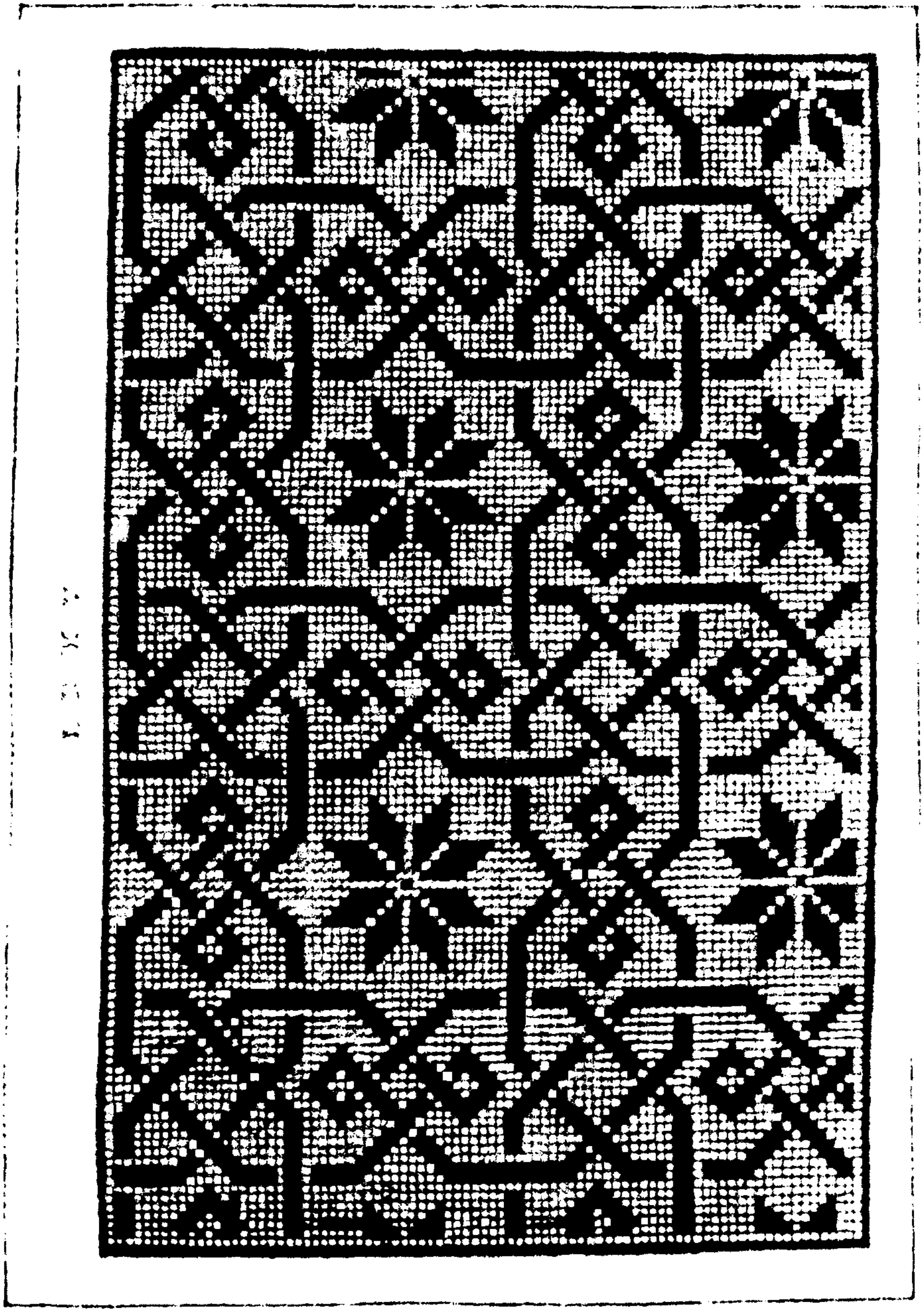


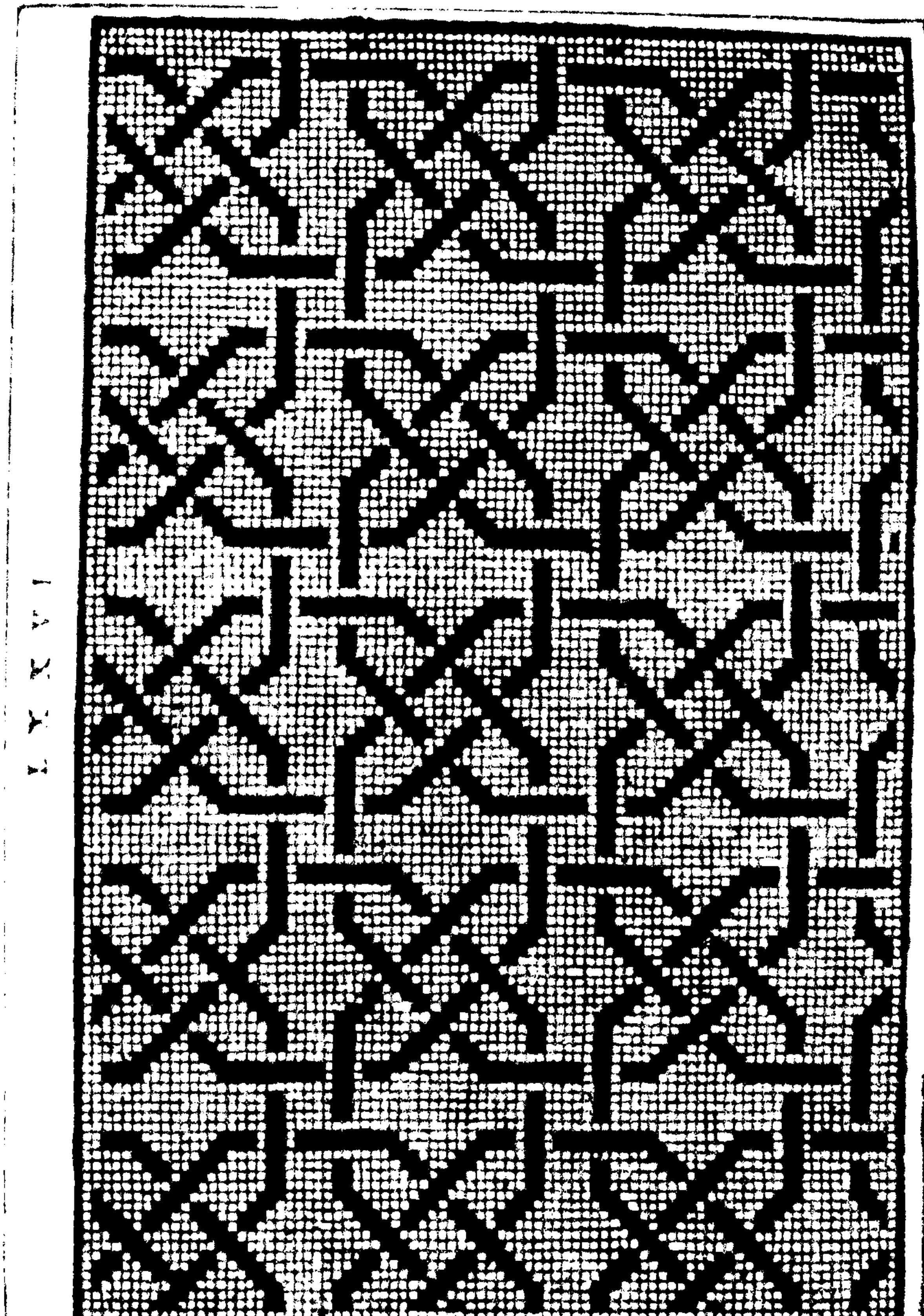
LXVI

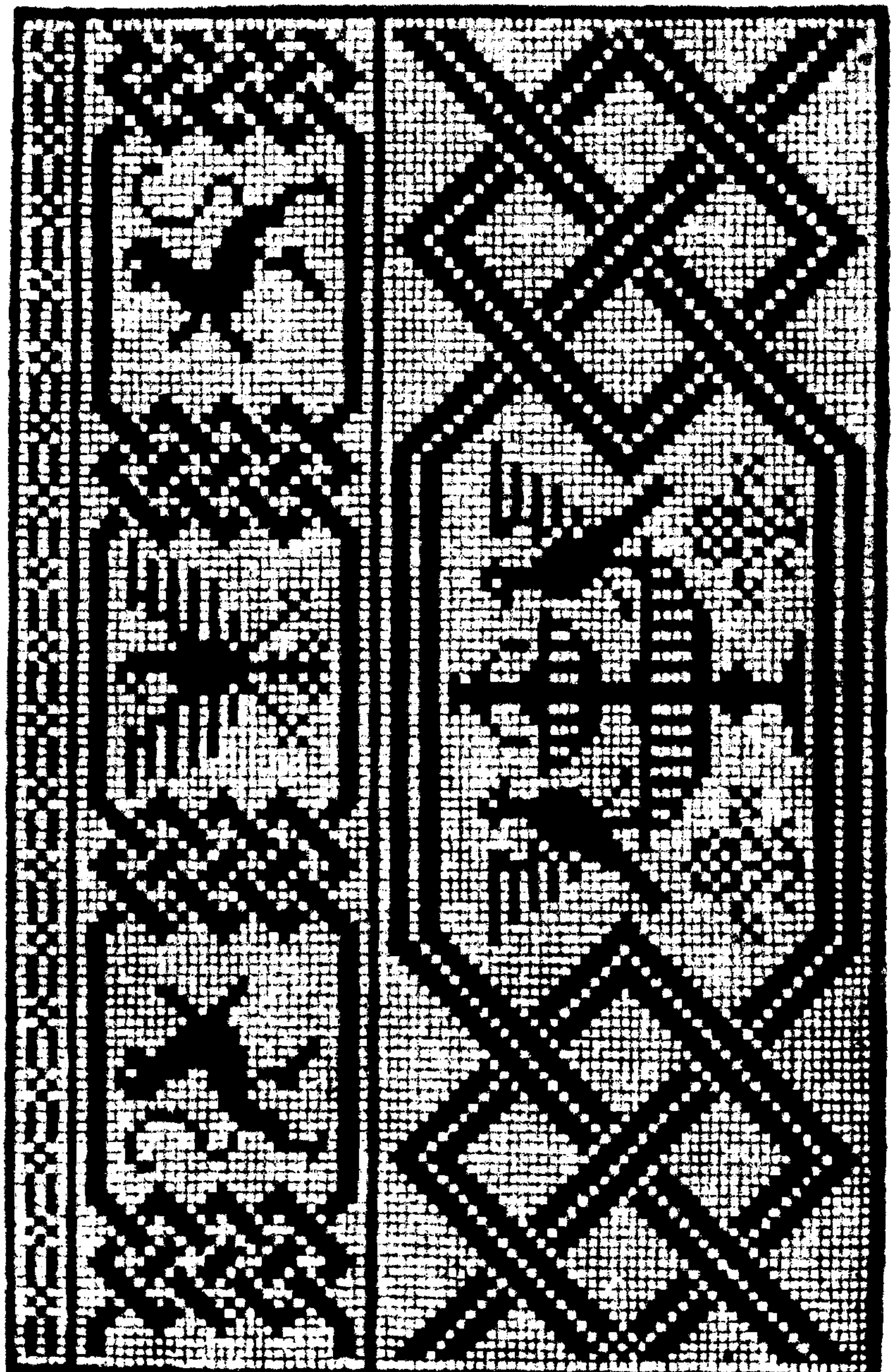




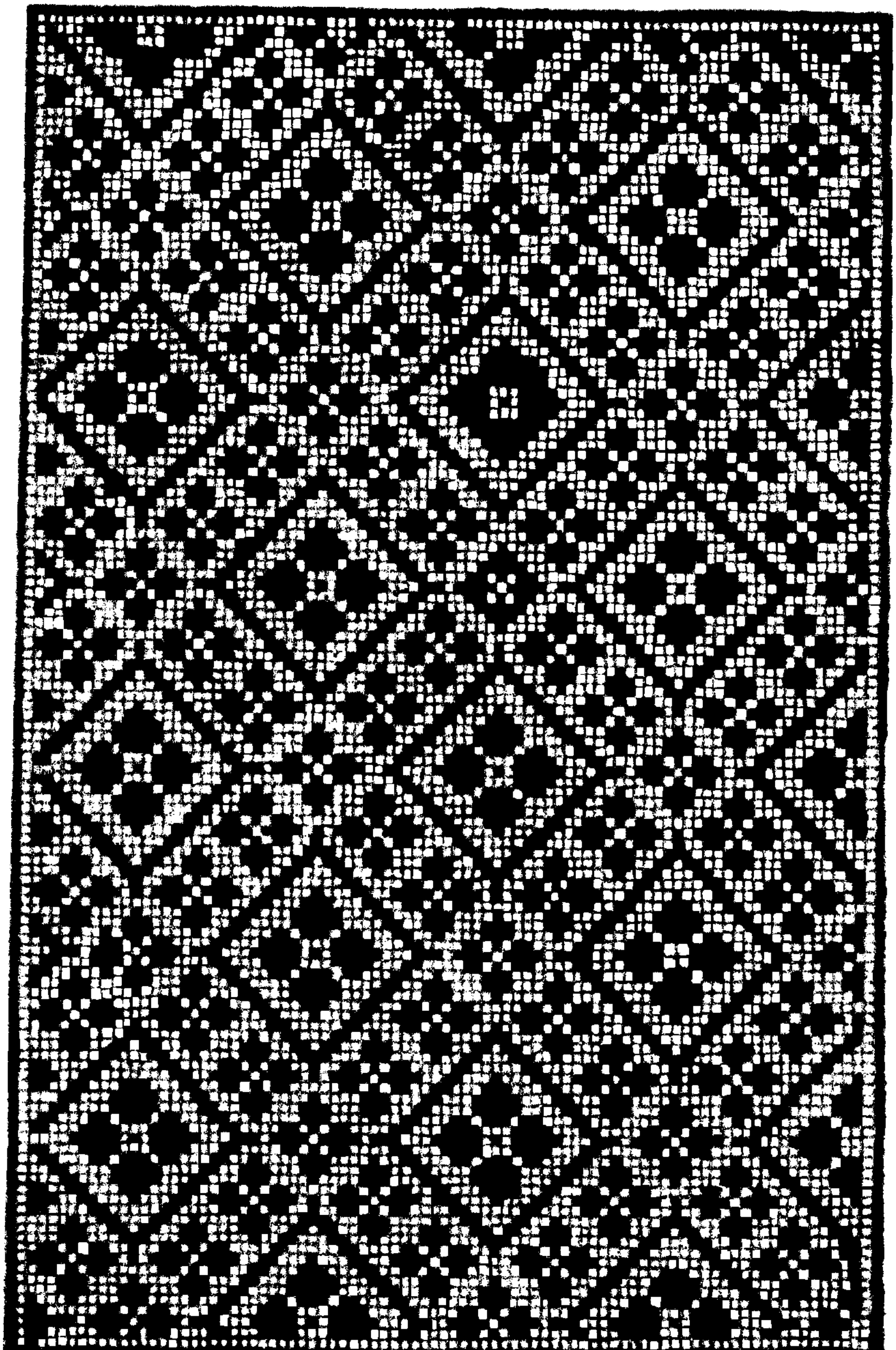




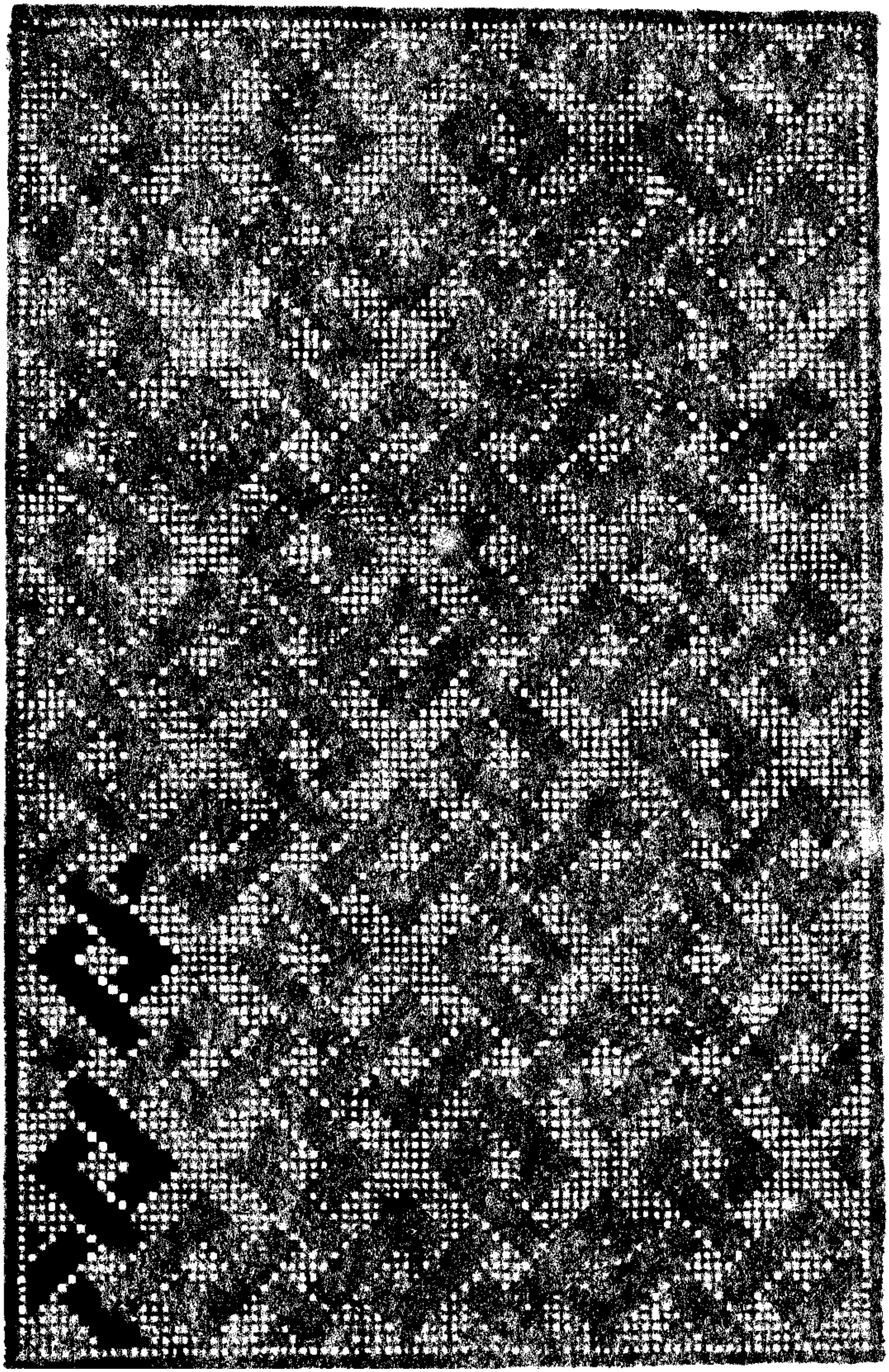


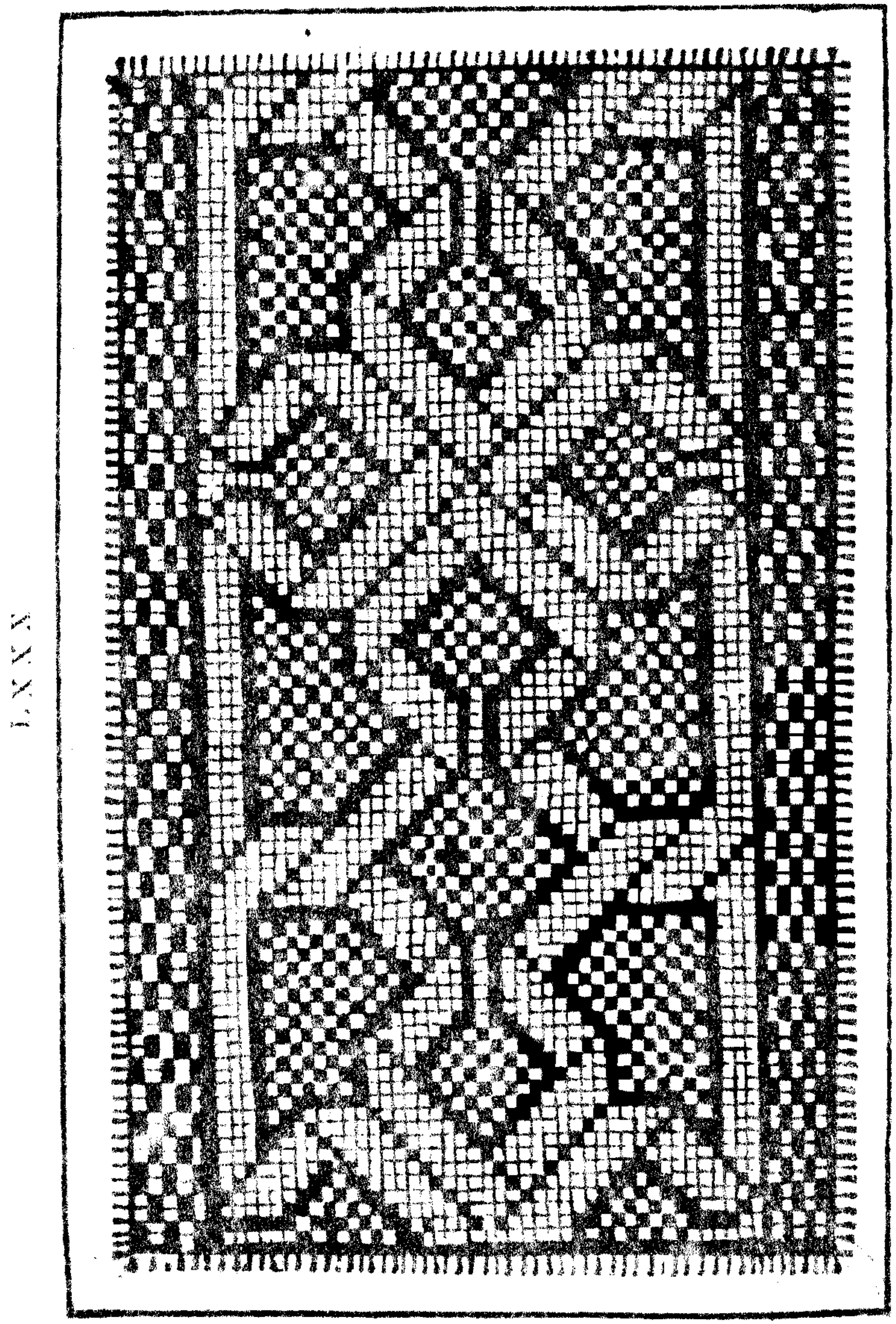


LXXVIII

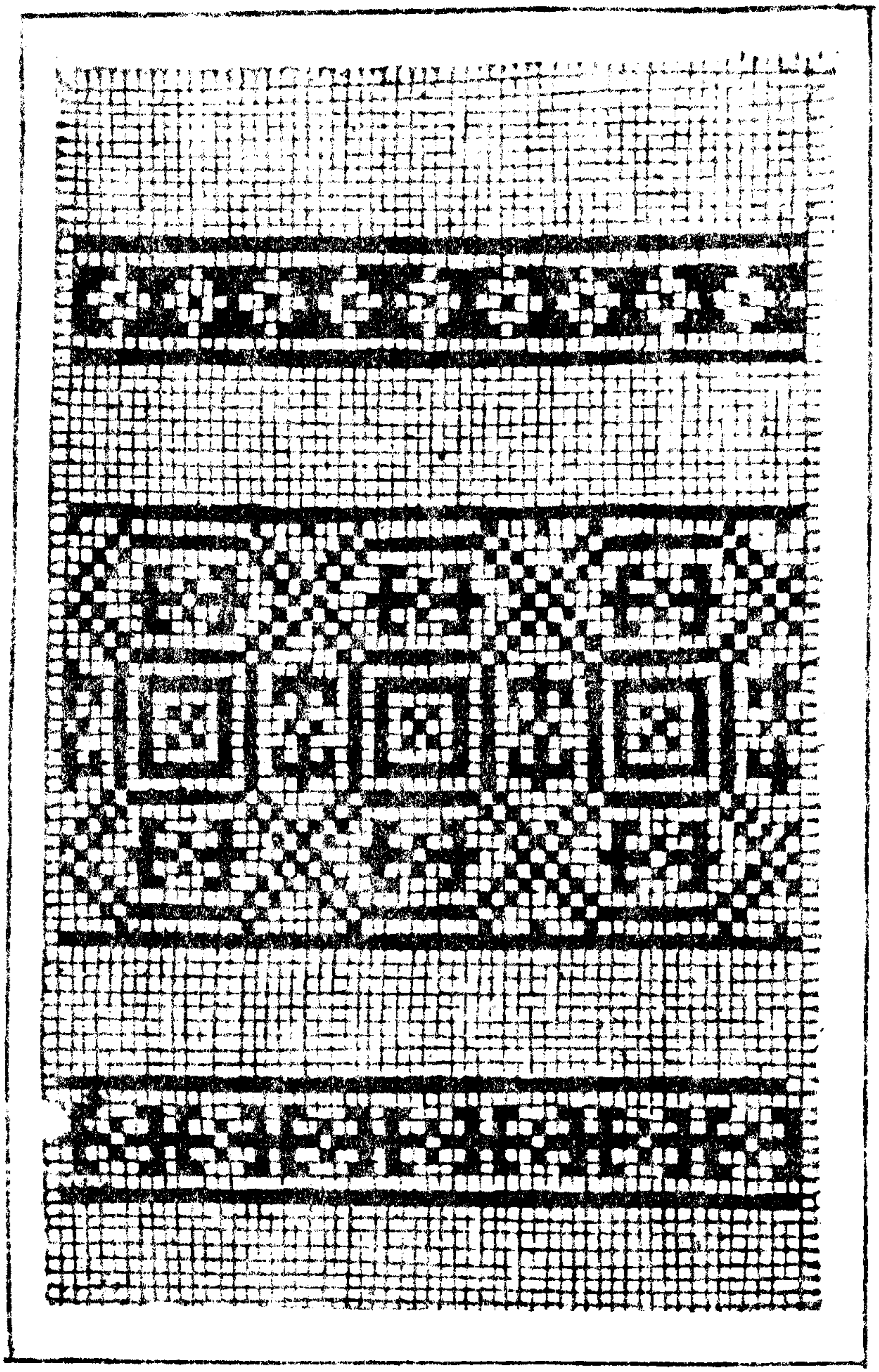


LXXIX



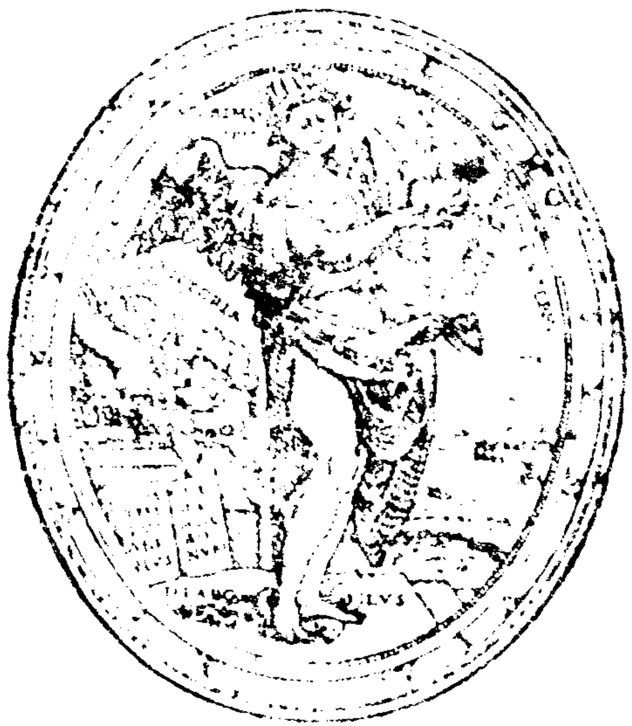


LXXXI



REGISTRO

A B C D E. Tutti ſono quaderni.



Stampato in Venetia, per Giouanni Oſtaus.

M. D. LXI.